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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF CONSOLING SPEECH ACT

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I

摘　要

本文以安慰言语行为为主要研究对象，就中美日常生活中经常遇到的共有言语行为——安慰在汉英文化背景下的差异及形成差异的原因等问题进行了归纳分析。进而，基于通过问卷所获得的语料，对安慰言语行为进行对比分析，并在此基础上提出了研究该行为的必要性和意义。

言语行为理论从哲学的角度为语言交流的本质提出了自己的见解，运用言语行为理论对语言现象进行分析是当前语用学研究的一个热点。当前，国内外学者对抱怨、反讽、请求、致谢、拒绝、称赞、招呼、邀请、威胁、道歉、告别以及委婉语等言语行为都进行了深入而细致的研究，但仍有很多其他言语行为尚待研究，对安慰这个言语行为的研究就是其中之一.

安慰是普遍存于人类社会一种的现象，是人际交流中一种特殊的交际方式，不管我们社会地位如何，也不论我们置身于何处，我们总可以在日常交流中用到它，能够在影视、文学作品中看到它。安慰，可以表现为非言语行为，也可以表现为言语行为，本文关注的是作为言语行为的安慰。什么是安慰？说话人为什么要做出安慰行为？安慰言语行为会有哪些异同？如果出现差异，出现差异的原因是什么？本文拟就上述几个问题进行分析。

就研究方法而言，本文拟从 Searle 的言语行为理论的角度，对安慰言语行为进行全方位的分析。同时，在 Brown & Levinson 的实验框架下，本文将以问卷方式来调查安慰言语行为的表达模式，并结合 Blum-Kullka 及 Wood & Kroger 言语分析的三个层面,即中心言语行为、辅助言语行为和修饰语来对安慰言语行为进行分析，着重对比其安慰中心行为语和辅助行为语的结构、安慰中心行为语的策略形式、安慰中心行为语的形式，安慰辅助行为语的类别和安慰修饰语。

本文的研究成果欲让读者对安慰言语行为有更清晰的认识，知道英汉语境下安慰的表达模式差异，以期在未来的跨文化交际中能有一定的指导意义。同时，本文的研究成果将告诉读者 Brown & Levinson 理论可以成功地运用于安慰言语行为的分析，Blum-Kullka 及 Wood & Kroger 言语分析的三个层面在言语行为分析过程中具有普遍性。

关键词：言语行为　安慰　对比研究

Abstract

Recently, one of the hot topics in the field of pragmatic study is to apply the speech acts theory into the analysis of language phenomenon. So far, a great many studies concerning speech acts, such as complaining, irony, requests, expressing thanks, refusing, praising, inviting, threatening, apologizing, bidding farewell as well as euphemisms, have been conducted seriously. In spite of this, there are still a number of speech acts to be explored. The study of consoling speech act belongs to one of these.

Consoling, a fairly common social phenomenon, universally exists. No matter how high our social status is and no matter where we are, consoling will be used in our daily communication and can be seen in the movies, television and literature works. Consoling can be reflected in the way of non-speech acts, and it can also be in the way of speech acts. This dissertation will focus on consoling from the perspective of speech acts. Then what is consoling? What are the necessities to study the consoling speech act? What are the similarities and differences between Chinese speakers and American speakers when expressing consoling? If there are discrepancies, then what are the causes?

In terms of methodology, this dessertation belongs to contrastive study based on the data collection collected from daily conversation. From Searle's speech acts theory, this dissertation will explore consoling comprehensively. At the same time, under the experimental model of Brown & Levinson, this paper is going to use a questionnaire to survey the expression modes of consoling. Coupled with the analysis model of speech acts of Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger, this paper is to concentrate on the similarities and differences of consoling under Chinese and English cultures.

Through study, it is obvious that the readers are going to have a clearer understanding of consoling. Now that the readers have learned the similarities and differences of expression modes of consoling under Chinese and English context, it goes without saying that it will hold a positive influence on the future communication. At the same time, the success of this paper will tell that the analysis model of speech acts of Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger and the experimental model of Brown & Levinson can be applied to the analysis of speech acts of consoling successfully.

Keywords: consoling; speech acts; contrastive study; the analysis model of speech acts

Contents

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 The present study of consoling speech act and the significance of the study

The research area, consoling, a particular linguistic phenomenon, universally exists. To put it more simply, no matter how high our social status is, no matter where we are, consoling will be used in our daily communication and can be seen in the movies, television and literature works.

Pragmatics does not confine itself to merely describing how people use language, but also concerns itself with how to help them become better users (Mey, 1994). This dissertation considers consoling as a communicative strategy, which will help Chinese people and also those foreign friends to understand the expression modes of consoling in each other's culture, eventually improving their communicative skills. So far, a great many studies concerning speech acts, such as complaining, irony, requesting, expressing thanks, refusing, praising, inviting, threatening, apologizing, bidding farewell as well as euphemisms, have been conducted seriously. In spite of this, there are still a number of speech acts to be explored. The study of consoling speech act belongs to one of these. Rare articles concerning the consoling speech act can be seen. Therefore, it is fairly necessary for us to study such a common but interesting language phenomenon.

The purpose of the contrastive study of the consoling speech act in this paper is to make people have a general understanding about the similarities and differences of consoling speech act in Chinese and American culture. The consoling speech acts are of great importance in both language contexts. When we study the consoling speech act, we hope that people can get some information about the features of this type of utterance. After learning the consoling, people can make use of it better and more effectively when they are going to console someone who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. The realization of this aim is of great significance no matter to the individual or to the whole society. As we know, in our life, no matter who we are, Chinese or Americans, we are doomed to be confronted with happiness and sadness, ups and downs. And in our internal personality, we have the weak side. When we are confronted with the unhappy events, no matter who we are, we need the consoling from other people, especially the one from our family members, friends, classmates, colleagues. In fact, the negative mind

of the one who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment can be lessened or eliminated by the effective consoling without delay. Timely and effective consoling will make the person who is in grief, sorrow, disappointment recover quickly, get happy and become optimistic about the life again. Even it can be sometimes helpful to save a person's life or soul and guard the harmony of the family as well as the stability of the society. So it can be known that consoling is a necessity of the human society.

True, consoling is a reflection of the interpersonal kindness, friendship and love between family members and one of the most effective ways to conduct the psychological rescue. However, it is not a heritage of human being. So we need to learn how to console a person who is in grief, sorrow, or disappontment. If we want to learn how to console and cheer a person up, the most important thing is to learn to make use of the language of consoling well. To put it in other words, we need to study the speech act of consoling, helping people to make use of the consoling more effectively. It can be believed that the study of consoling speech act will improve the interpersonal relations and facilitate the cross-cultural communication.

As we all know, the American culture is one of the most influential cultures in the world. The communication between China and American become more and more frequent. And consoling is a necessity in the daily communication. If we know the similarities and differences of consoling in our two cultures and learn to use it when we conduct the cross-culture communication, it will greatly facilitate the communication between our two sides. Besides, the study of consoling speech act is a need to deepen the study of the pragmatics. One of the important tasks of the pragmatic study is to perfect the system of the language communication. In this system, consoling speech act shoule be regarded as an important item in the communication. The study of consoling is definitely helpful for the development and perfection of the system of the language communication.

1.2　The objective of the study

The first aim of the paper is to make readers have a compresive understanding of consoling. The most important purpose is to survey the expression modes of consoling under Chinese and English context. In addition, the reasons will be explored to explain the cause of the different expression modes. To reach the above goals, the following questions will be involved: what is consoling? What are the necessities to study the

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consoling speech act? What are the similarities and differences between Chinese speakers and American speakers when expressing consoling? If there are discrepancies, then what are the causes?

1.3 Methodology and data collection

This dissertation belongs to contrastive studies based on the datas collected from daily conversation. Based on Searle's speech acts theory, Brown & Levinson's politeness theory, and the analysis model of speech acts of Blum- Kullka as welll as Wood & Kroger, this dissertation will explore consoling comprehensively. As for data, under the modle of politeness stratigies of Brown & Levinson，this dissertation is going to make use of Discourse-completion Test which is the dominant data collection method to design a questionnaire to survey the expression modes of consoling. Coupled with the analysis model of speech acts of Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger, this paper is going to concentrate on the similarities and differences of consoling under Chinese and English cultures.

1.4 The layout of the dissertation

The paper begins with a consideration of speech acts and politeness theories with a view to shed more light on consoling speech act. Based on the experimental framework which is offered by Brown & Levinson (1987) and the analysis model of speech acts of Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger (1994), consoling speech act of both Chinese and Americans are analysed and compared from five aspects: the structures of central speech acts and auxiliary speech acts, the strategy types of the central speech act, forms of central speech act, types of auxiliary speech act and microunit. The paper finally concludes with an account of their underlying reasons for discrepancies.

Chapter Two Theoretical Framework

2.1 Consoling in communication

To study the consoling speech act in communication, speech act theory will serve as a basis to study it. At the same time, we must combine the speech act with the context, so the politeness theories must be taken into account as well.

2.1.1 Speech Acts thoery

As the title of this thesis shows that consoling is regarded as a speech act, there are necessities to introduce the theory of speech acts, especially those by John Langshaw Austin and John Searle. Speech act theory is an important theory in the pragmatic study of language. It is a philosophical explanation of the nature of linguistic communication. John Langshaw Austin, a British linguist, originally brought up the theory of speech acts in 1955. Later, John Searle, who was his student futher developed the theory and perfected the shaping of it. The theory of speech acts indicated that we can achieve some objectives through the act of using language under concrete circumstances. The basic viewpoint is: when we are uttering some words, we are performing certain acts; and the process of linguistic communication is composed of a sequence of acts.

There was a linguistic turn in western philosophy at the beginning of the twentieth century based on the work of the scholars such as G. Frege, B. Russel, G. Moore and L. Wittgenstein. Philosophers then shared the opinion that a host of philosophical problems were in fact problems of language and could be handled if we did a proper analysis of language. Because of this, this movement of philosophy was known as analytic philosophy, also as linguistic philosophy, of which ordinary language philosophy was a major development. Another major school of analytic philosophy was called logical positivism, or logical empiricism, represented by people like Moriz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, Alfred Tarski and Alfred Ayer.

Ordinary language philosophy and logical positivism have different attitudes towards the theory of meaning. Ordinary language philosophers cling to a point of view that investigation of ordinary language is of some importance in understanding philosophical questions. Philosophers, such as Austin, Grice, Strawson, Searle, and Wittgenstein, concentrated on the way in which ordinary language is used. These philosophers were convinced that there are at least two ways of conceiving meanings in

language. One of them is concerning the actual utterence, without either consideration of the context in which they are uttered or for the objective of the utterer in addressing the discourse to another. The second approach considers the utterance in relation to its occasion of use in place of a timeless sense. And it can be judged in terms of truth or falsity conditions or by well-formedness according to grammatical rules. However, Language positivism holds a different idea that unless a sentence can be verified, that is to say, tested for its truth or falsity, it is meaningless. And they developed a theory of meaning based on the truth conditions.

2.1.1.1 Austin's Theory of Speech Acts

According to Austin, statements are used by the speaker to do something. That is to say, the speaker, when uttering sentences, is actually performing certain acts. In his viewpoint, the production of any utterance consists of four elements: sounds and construction of an utterance; literal meaning of an utterance; implied intentions of the speaker; hearers' understanding and reaction. These four elements form a whole process of producing a speech act. When producing a speech act, a speaker is performing three acts simutaneously: a locutinary act, an illocutionary act and a perlocutionary act.

> A locutinary act involves the uttering of an expression with sense and reference, i.e., using sounds and words with meaning.
> An illocutionary act is the act performed in saying the locution, such that what was said had the force of that illocution.
> A perlocutionary act is the consequential effects of an utterence on an interlocutor, i.e., what is acieved by saying something.

(Austin, 1982:99-103)

The theory has aroused great interest among scholars in the 1960's and 1970's. Of the three speech acts, linguists are most interested in the illocutionary act because this kind of speech act is identical with the speaker's intention. And in their study of language communication, linguists are most interested in how a speaker expresses his intention and also how his intention is recognized by the hearer. The theory of speech acts provided great philosophical insight into the nature of linguistic communication. In the light of the theory, when we are speaking, we are performing acts; and the process of linguistic communication consists of a sequence of acts. To put it more specificly, when people order, refuse, apologize, complain, threaten, greet, express thanks, reassure, promise, scold, praise, congratulate, warn, quarrel or request, they are making use of utterences to perform a speech act. Consoling just belongs to one type of these speech acts.

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2.1.1.2 John sealre's Contribution to the Theory of Speech Acts

According to John Searle, any lingustic communication will involve speech acts. The unit of lingustic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol or word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of a sentence token. To take the token as a message is to take it as a produced or issued token. More precisely, the production or issuance of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act, and speech acts (of certain kinds to be explained later) are the basic or minimal units of lingustic communication (Searle, 1969:16). One of the contributions Searle has made is his classification of illocutionary acts. This is something Austin himself had tried to do but did not do very successfully. In the book *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin proposed a preliminary classification of speech acts: verdictives, exercisives, expositives, commissives and behabitives. Austin's classification is far from perfect. In accordance with Searle, Austin advances his five categories very tentatively, more as a basic for discussion than as a set of established results (Searle, 1979:8). In The Classification of Illocutionary Acts (1976), Searle divided illocutionary acts into five general categories. In other words, there are five general types of things we do with language, each type having a common, general purpose. They are assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. In 1979, Searle further perfected the five types as the follows:

> Assertives, which commits the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding). All of the members of the assertive class are assessable on the dimention of assessment which includes true or false.
> Directives, which are attempts (of varying degrees, and hence, more precisely, they are determinates of the determinable which includes attempting) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something (paradigm cases: requesting, questioning). They may be very modest "attempts" as when I invite you to do it or suggest that you do it, or they may be very fierce attempts as when I insist that you do it.
> Commissives, which are those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promsing, offering).
> Expressives, whose illocutionary point of this class is to express a psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content (paradigm cases: congratualting, apologizing)
> Declarations bring about some alteration in the status or condition of the referred to object or objects solely in virtue of the fact that the declaration has been successfully performed. It effects immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extralinguistic institutions (paradigm cases: chritening, marrying)

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(Searle, 1979:12-20)

By elaborating on the structures of illocutionary acts and the rules that govern the illocutionary force, Searle (1969) further develops Austin's work and refines the theory of speech acts.

Another contribution of Searle to the Theory of Speech Acts is his further development of Austin's concept of felicity. He proposes that all speech acts are defined by four types of felicity conditions: prepositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, and essential conditions.

And in 1975, John Searle put forward the concept: indirect speech acts, which makes up for his early theory. Indirect speech acts are cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another. In indirect speech acts, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both lingustic and nonlingustic, togrther with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer. It can be seen that Searle not only emphasizes the importance of the speaker's intention, but pays attention on the social conventions as well. In his viewpoint, if we want to perform certain speech acts, we are supposed to follow a set of social conventions.

2.1.2 Politeness Theories

True, Austin and Searle's points of view to the speech acts show a broad orientation for this paper, but Brown and Levinson's (1987) socialingustic theory of politeness strategies and Leech's politeness principle (1983) provide a more specific theoretical framework for this study.

In recent years, the politeness theory has become a hot topic in pragmatics. It is said that their theory can be checked easily in language context. Brown & Levinson stated their theory by making use of the speech act of request. However, the consoling speech act is one type of speech acts that threaten the negative face of the speaker. By performing consoling, the speaker shows his/her sympathy towards the hearer and conveys some relevant evaluation of the act, guarding his/her face. When we console someone, we will definitely give priority to politeness.

2.1.2.1 Brown and Levison's Face-saving Theory

Politeness is a universal phenomenon. It is one of the constraints on human interaction, whose purpose is to consider others' feelings, establish levels of mutual

confort, and promote rapport. Though politeness exists in every language, it is cultural-bounded. There are different criterias in different cultures.

According to Brown & Levison (1987), their politeness theory universally exists. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory builds upon Goffman's (1967) idea of "face" and their theory is so called "face-saving theory". Brown and Levinson propose that people have an innate desire to monitor one's and other's "face" in social situations. Members in human society have basic face wants and each member does do something to maintain each other's face. The face here refers to "public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" and "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended in interaction" (Brown and Levinson,1987:67).

Brown and Levinson construct face as consisting of two kinds of desires and face-wants that individual interactants attribute to one another (1987:13), and that every member knows every other member desires (1987:61). They call these as "negative face" and "positive face".

> Negative face, which refers to one's want to be unimpeded by others and to one's claim to freedom of action;
> Positive face, which has to do with one's want to be appreciated and approved of by others
>
> (Brown and Levinson, 1987:67)

Various linguistic acts, like apologies, consoling, and request, infringe on the interlocutors' face and facilitate strategies to reduce the threat to the public self-images. These acts coupled with others (threaten, complaint) are Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). According to Brown and Levinsin (1987), FTAs vary in terms of the kind of threat involved, which can be classified as follows:

> 1) Acts threatening to the hearer's positive face by indicating the speaker's lack of concern for the hearer's self-image, such as disagreeing, criticism, accusation, insult, contempt, ridicule, complaint, reprmand, etc.
> 2) Acts threatening to the hearer's negative face by imposing on the hearer, such as order, request, suggestion, advice, threat, warning, dare, offer, complaint, and expression of strong emotions, etc.
> 3) Acts threatening to the speaker's positive face, such as apology, accepting compliments, confession, and admission of responsibility, etc.
> 4) Acts threatening to the speaker's negative face, such as thanking, accepting thanks, making excuses, accepting offers, and making reluctant promises or offers, etc.

According to Brown and Levinsin, linguistic acts are intrinsically face-threatening, so a speaker will try to avoid such face-threatening acts and take strategies to lessen the threat and reduce any possible offence to all parties involved.

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In a concrete context, the assessment of the seriousness of a FTA depends on a great many factors. Brown and Levinson (1987) assume that there are three sociological variables that affect the assessment of the seriousness of a FTA in many or perhaps all cultures:

> 1) Social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer, in effect, the degree of familiarity and solidarity they share.
> 2) Relative power (P) of the speaker with respect to the hearer, i.e. the degree to which the speaker can impose his/her will on the hearer.
> 3) Absolute ranking (R) of imposition in the culture, both in terms of the expenditure of goods or service by the hearer, the right of the speaker to perform the act, and the degree to which the hearer welcoms the imposition.
> The degree of threat posed by FTA depends on these three independent variables. We can use the following formula to caculate the weightiness:
> $$W= D (S, H) + P(S, H) + R$$
> The actors in a society have mutual knowledge of the assumed values of these variables. Actors will draw upon mutual understanding of the sociological variables to assess the seriousness of a FAT. In general, the face threat of a communicative act becomes greater in situation where 1) there is great social distance between a speaker and an addressee; 2) greater power or status of the addressee relative to the speaker, and 3) greater imposition posed. These three variables are context-dependent and have to be allowed for contextual reclassification to adjust the assignments in certain circumstance (1987:87).

2.1.2.2 Leech's Politeness Theory

As for Leech, to be polite is mainly a motivation to violate Grice's (1975) conversational maxim (quantity maxim, quality maxim, relation maxim, and manner maxim (Grice, 1975:307-308)). His politeness principle is divided into six maxims:

> 1) Tact Maxim
>   a) Minimize cost to other
>   b) Maximize benefit to other
> 2) Generosity Maxim
>   a) Minimize benefit to self
>   b) Maximize cost to self
> 3) Approbation Maxim
>   a) Minimize dispraise of other
>   b) Maximize praise of other
> 4) Modesty Maxim
>   a) Minimize praise of self
>   b) Maximize dispraise of self
> 5) Agreement Maxim
>   a) Minimize disagreement between self and other
>   b) Maximize agreement between self and other
> 6) Sympathy Maxim
>   a) Minimize antipathy between self and other
>   b) Maximize sympathy between self and other

The above six maxims can be generally formulated in two aspects: to minimize the expression of impolite beliefs and to maximize the expression of polite beliefs.

The politeness theory of Leech offers some useful insights into the study of various speech acts. Among the six maxims, it is the Tact maxim, Modesty Maxim, and Sympathy Maxim that work in the speech of consoling directly. To put it more simply, when responding to other's grief, sorrow, or disappointment, one is supposed to follow the principles: maximize benefit of other, maximize dispraise of self, and maximize sympathy between self and other. The relative precedence given to one of the three maxims may lead to accepting or rejecting a consoling, however the situation in responding to consolings seems not always so straightforward. The consoling speech act is more complicated and revealing than it appears in terms of the relations between language' society and culture, especially when culture, or subculture, or specific sociocultural norm come into force.

2.2 Definition of Consoling Speech Act

Before we study the speech act of consoling, we are going to beat out the sense of consoling from the dictionary. There are different definition of consoling.

In Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995), consoling is to make (someone who is sad or diasppointed) feel better by giving them comfort or sympathy.

In Random House Webster's Dictionaryof American English (1997), consoling is to lessen the grief, sorrow, or disappointment of; give comfort to.

According to a saying in the paper "安慰语初探" (Wen Yunshui,1999), the definition of consoling is like this: 安慰是指在某人焦虑、痛苦或遭受苦难时，使其心情安适。

Based on the definition of Wen Yunshui (1999), in this paper, consoling is defined as a speech act in which the speaker gives comfort to the hearer as a reaction to the hearer's grief, sorrow, or disappointment, the consequence of which is perceived as affecting the speaker favorably. And from the perspective of felicity conditions for convience of identifying utterances which are count as consoling, this paper would like to define consoling as follows:

Prepositional condition: the speaker expresses his/her sympathy or comfort towards the hearer's grief, sorrow, or disappointment, which is helpful to the speaker's positive face or goes with the sacial norms.

Preparatory condition: the speaker has the right or is convinced that it is reasonable to express his/her sympathy or comfort. With the consoling, the speaker can gain

psychological balance by making the hearer be cheered or relaxed.

Sincere condition: the speaker prefers to let the hearer know that his/her sorrow, grief, disappointment will be all right and everything will go well. And the speaker expects the hearer to gain encouragement and be cheered.

Essential condition: the speaker attempts to make the hearer be cheered or relaxed.

Also, for the speech act of consoling to take place, the following prerequisites should be fulfilled:

1) The hearer feels sad or disappointed;

2) The speaker reckons that he/she has to console the hearer under that circumstance;

3) The verbal expression of the speaker relates directly or indirectly to the hearer's low spirits, thus having the illocutionary force of consoling.

4) The speaker reckons the hearer's situations as: a) for the sake of the social cooperative relationship with the hearer, the speaker is free to express his understanding to the hearer; the speaker therefore chooses to express his/her sympathy or comfort because what he/she has said to console the hearer will be in part good for his face or image; and b) the main goal of such consoling is to ensure that the speaker's positive face is guarded as a result of consoling.

2.3 The study concerning the Consoling Speech Act

There are many scholars home and abroad who make use of speech act to observe the language phenomenon. A group of scholars including Blum-Kulka (1984) has ever carried out a project called Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realization Patterns for an international coorperative study. The project has studied different expression modes of different speech acts in different cultures. Their studies mainly touch upon the speech acts of requests and apologies. Many other scholars have studied different speech acts from different angles, such as praise (Wolfson, 1980), apologies (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983), complaint (Murphy & Neu, 1996), and so on. They mianly make use of the questionnaire to get the first-handed materials. From CNKI, there are many domestic studies concerning speech acts, such as Jia Yuxin (2004), Zhang Shaojie (1997), Wang Aihua (2001), and so on. 63 dessertations about speech act can be found there, ranging from requests, apologies, critisizing, praising, complaining, irony, expressing thanks, refusing, inviting, threatening, apologizing, bidding farewell, to euphemisms and so on.

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However, there is no particular study concerning the consoling speech act so far. From CNKI, we found seven articles about consolation. And to my knowledge, only one article "安慰语初探" (Wen Yunshui, 1999) is written from the angle of linguistics. However, the writer has just briefly mentioned the definition and the importance of the consoling study. No further study is explored in that paper. That is why we need to study more about the consoling speech act.

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Chapter Three Contrastive Analysis

Based on the experimental framework which is offered by Brown & Levinson (1987) and the analysis model of speech acts of Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger (1994) we will study and compare the expression modes of consoling in Chinese and American context by using the datas collected from the questionnaires.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research Method

I adopt the "discourse-completion Test" [(DCT), first used by Blum-Kullka (1982)] to design the questionnaire. The specific design refers to the one Blum-kulka et al (1984, 1989) uses to analyse the speech acts of request as a reference. At the same time, some points have been adjusted. The study involves 10 situations. In each situation, we describe a situation in which someone needs consoling, followed with a question. According to the question, the testees are asked to give the consoling words he will give when facing the given situations.

When it comes to the specific situations, all of them are concerning the daily life and these situations are very familiar to both the Chinese testees as well as the American ones. In the questionnaire (see appendix), the three variables, social distance, relative power, and absolute ranking are taken into consideration. The concrete situations involved in the questionnaire can be listed as follows:

Situations	Social distance	Relative power (the hearer* speaker)
S1 console the disappointed lover	Close	eaual
S2 console friend's sick father	very far	high
S3 console your dying spouse	very	eaual
S4 console the disappointed uncle	close	high
S5 console the sick friend	close	equal
S6 console the disappointed friend	far	equal
S7 console a new friend having lost parents	close	equal
S8 console the five-yare-old niece	far	
S9 console a new friend losing his heart		low
S10 console a four-year –old boy	far	equal
	far	
		low
	far	

Table 1 situation in the questionnaire

3.1.2 The collection of the data

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the results, we have made use of the following steps to collect the datas. First and foremost, 20 questionnaires were handed out to the students in Kunming University of Science and Technology. This is to figure out whether the situations are feasible or not. Checking the results, we have made some adjustments. What's more, the questionnaire was translated into English version and then sent to the English professor Mathew Christopher Smith who is teaching in Uttaradit Rajabhat, Thailand. After his correction and following his advice, some points in the situations were adjusted again to make sure the expression used are proper and natural. And this questionnaire is also natuaral and feasible in Chinese context. At last, the questionnaire papers were sent to the Chinese testees as well as the American ones. One of my friends in Seattle, America, was asked to help look for the targeted testees and collect the questionnaire papers according to the set requirements.

3.1.3 Testees

There are 60 Chinese and American testees randomly chosen respectively. All of them are students who are not English majors. The valid questionnaire papers are 45 respcetively. Form the 45 valid questionnaire papers, 100 samples are randomly chosen

for the contrastive study.

3.2 The analysis

Based on the analysis model of speech acts of Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger (1994), the consoling speech act will be analysed. According to Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger, the analysis model of speech act contains three aspects: Central speech act (CSA), Auxiliary Speech Act (ASC), and Microunit. According to the results, the speech act of consoling consists of several semantic formulas, forming a sequence. In this sequence, each semantic formula does not play the equal role in performing the speech act of consoling. Among them, the Central Speech Act is the key to perform the speech act of consoling. The Auxiliary Speech Act is to help perform the speech act of consling. And the microunit is to modify the central and auxiliary speech act. This paper is going to study the speech acts of consoling from the following aspects:

1) The structure of Central Speech Act and Auxiliary Speech Act

2) The strategy types of the Central Speech Act

3) Forms of Cental Speech Act

4) Types of Auxiliary Speech Act

5) Microunit

These first four aspects are based on the project called Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realization Patterns carried out for an international coorperative study by a group of scholars including Blum-Kulka. This will help get more reliable results. This is the reason why this paper adopts the same classification. As for Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger, they do not include the microunit in their empirical study. However, it is added in the analysis just because it is a very important in analysing consoling speech act.

3.2.1 The structures of Central Speech Acts (CSA) and Auxiliary Speech Acts (ASC)

According to Blum-Kulla et al (1984:200), when we figure out the Central Speech Acts, we are supposed to follow three principles: order, context, and function. It is not difficult for us to distinguish microunit and the Central Speech Act as well as the Auxiliary Speech Act. For example,

① 舅舅，没事的。国内形势那么好，留在这里，机会会更多。（C, S4）

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② My friend, I am so sorry that you got this thing, but I believe you will fight it away. (AE, S2) ("C" is short for the Chinese sample, "AE" for American English sample, "S" for situation)

The two sample sequences here can be divided into three levels:

a) The Central Speech Act:

—"没事的"

—"I am so sorry that you got this thing"

b) The Auxiliary Speech Act

—"国内形势那么好，留在这里，机会会更多"

—"but I believe you will fight it away."

c) The Microunit

—"舅舅"

—"My friend", "but"

But when it comes to the difference between the Central Speech Act and the Auxiliary Speech Act, it will be of great difficulty. When we analyze the samples, the level of how direct the expression of consoling is will be taken into consideration to judge the central speech act in a consoling sequence. Usually, if we have the direct expression of consoling, we will naturally consider it as the speech act, and the other relative expression of consoling as the auxiliary speech act. And when we can't find out the direct and clear expression of consoling, the first sentence containing the meaning of consoling will be seen as the central speech act. For example,

①老伴儿，人生本来就有始有终，坦然面对，开心过最后的日子。（C， S3）

② Lily, there are so many guys out there. You should take a break from boys for now, but try not to worry about it. You can do better than him. (AE, S1)

The two sample sequences here can also be divided into three levels:

a) The Central Speech Act

—"人生本来就有始有终"

— "there are so many guys out there"

b) The Auxiliary Speech Act

—"坦然面对，开心过最后的日子"

— "You should take a break from boys for now, but try not to worry about it. You can do better than him."

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c) The Microunit

—"老伴儿"

—"Lily"

In this paper, the structures of Central Speech Acts are divided into six ones: 1) central speech act only; 2) auxiliary speech act post-posed; 3) auxiliary speech act pre-posed; 4) cental speech act in between-posed; 5) multiple cental speech acts; 6) auxiliary speech act only.

3.2.1.1 Cental Speech Act only (CSA)

As for the structure with the central speech act only, it is usually very direct and brief, for example,

① 老舅，想开点！（C，S9）

② You will get over it. (AE, S9)

The following figure is the result got from the questionnaire in Chinese and English.
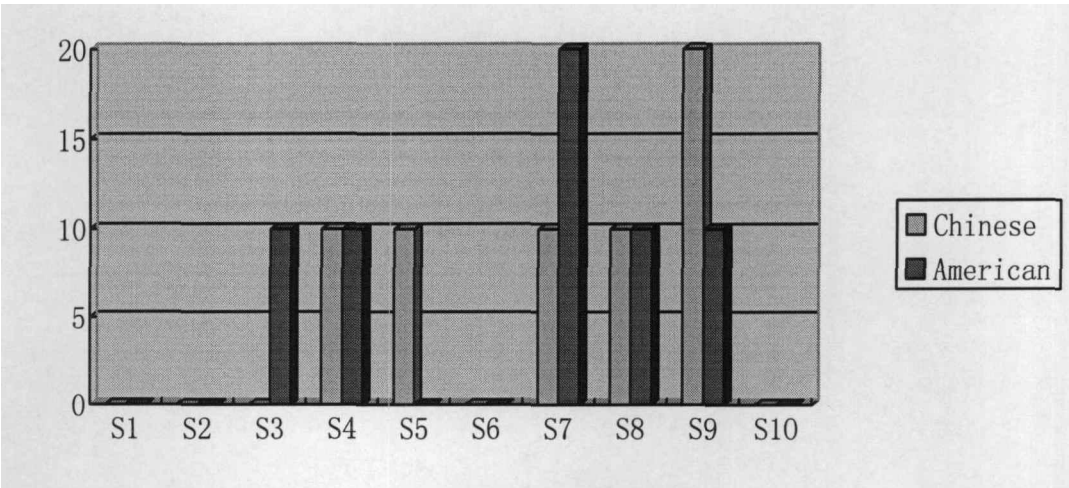

Fig. 1 CSA

From the figure above, it can be seen that both the Chinese and American seldom choose the central speech act to express their consoling. In the 200 sample answers from the questionnaires in Chinese and English, only 9 expressions use the central speech act to express the consoling. That is to say, only 5% people will choose to directly convey their consoling speech act without any other supporting details when consoling people. In the Chinese context, the result concerning the adopotion of central speech act is the same as the one in the American context, only 5% people respectively choosing to make use of the structure of central speech act to show their sympathy or comfort to the hearer.

When they really choose this way to express their consoling, the language they use is quite brief and direct as it can be seen in the given examples. Also we can see that no matter how close the social distance is and how high the realative power, people are likely to choose this structure with central speech act only. More we can see from the ten samples is that when people adopt this structure, the language they use is more positive in place of being negative.

3.2.1.2 Auxiliary Speech Act post-posed: CSA+ ASA

As for the auxiliary speech act post-posed, the speaker chooses to directly show his/her sympathy or comfort to the hearer first, which then is coupled with some other supporting details. It is a frequently used way by people, for example,

① 没事的，忘了他吧！好男人多的是，再找一个也无妨。(C, S1)

② Calm down. Relax! You will find someone better. Let's go somewhere so you can forget about him! (AE, S1)

The following figure is the result got from the questionnaire in Chinese and English.
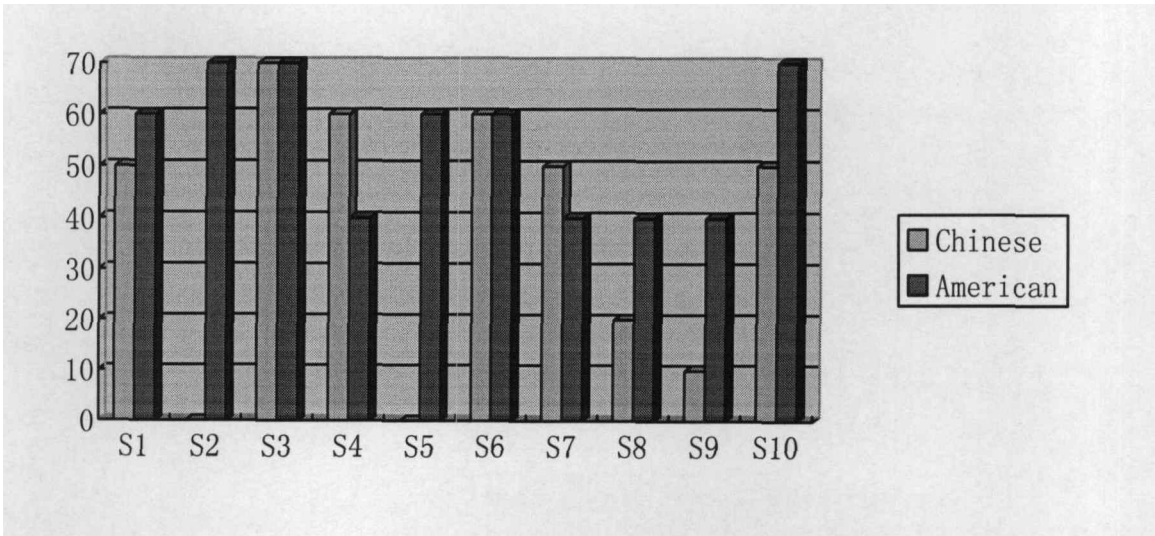

Fig.2 CSA+ASA

From the figure given here, 46% people will choose to make use of the structure of CSA+ASA to express their consoling to the hearer. It can be seen that more Americans prefer to console people by directly stating their sympathy or comfort coupled with some other auxiliary words. In the randomly chosen samples in the Chinese and Anerican questionnaire respectively, about 55% Americans makes use of this structure of CSA+ASA, and only 37% Chinese chooses this structure.

As we can see in the chart for situation 1, situation 2, situation 5, situation 6 and situation 10, more than 50% Americans choose to perform their consoling speech act by consoling directly with the auxiliary details attached, especially that in situation 2 and situation 10. In situation 2 where the hearer's relative power is higher than that of the speaker, 70% Americans choose the structure with CSA+ ASA to convey their consoling, while for the Chinese, it is a completely different situation. We can see from the figure that no Chinese adopt this structure in this situation. As for the reason, we will discuss it in the following chapter.

And we can see a very interesting phenomenon from the analysis. Situation 1, situation 2, and situation 10 stand for consoling people with different relative power. That is to say, no matter how different the hearer's relative power towards that of the speaker, the structure with CSA+ASA can be used by people.

3.2.1.3 Auxiliary Speech Act pre-posed: ASA + CSA

As for the structure with the auxiliary speech act pre-posed, the speaker chooses to express his/her sympathy or comfort after some other supporting details. The key point is summed after the supporting details, for example,

①有颗为班集体做贡献的，没当上班长照样能为班集体做事。别伤心乐！(C, S6)

② In a few days， you will be OK. Don't worry too much. (AE, S2)

The following figure is the result got from the questionnaire in Chinese and English.
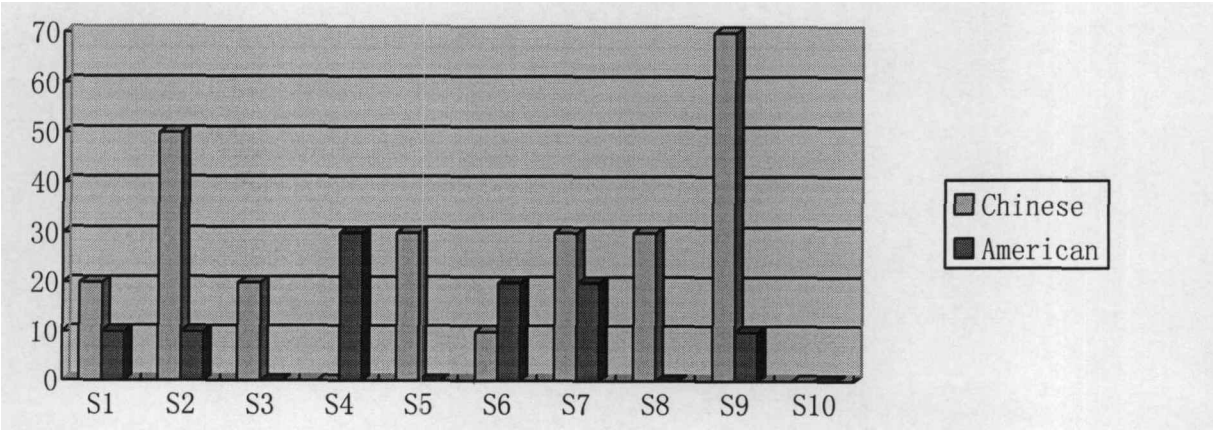

Fig. 3 ASA+CSA

From the figure here, we know that 19% people would like to make use of the structure of ASA+CSA to console the hearer. We can see that the structure with ASA +

CSA has got different response from the Chinese and Americans. More Chinese can be seen to make use of the structure of ASA+CSA to convery their consoling than Americans. We can see from the analysis, 28% Chinese use this structure, while only 10% Americans chooese to adopt this structure. It is clear that Chinese prefer to begin their consoling with some other relative details to enhance the central speech act after that.

In situation 1, situation2 and situation 9, about 57% Chinese make use of this structure. Besides the different responses in situation 1, situation 2 and situation 9, we can see great differences in situation 3, situatin 5, situation 8 as well. In situation 3, situation 5 and situation 8, about 20% Chinese people adopt this structure, while no Americans choose this way at all. On the contrary, in situation 4 where the speaker is asked to console one relative whose relative power is higher than that of the speaker, the result is completely different. No Chinese use this structure.

Comparing with the result of situation 4 in Fig.2, we can find that Chinese would rather choose the structure with CSA+ASA than the structure with ASA+CSA. And it can be clearly seen from this perspective that when it comes to console the family member whose relative power is higher than that of the speaker, the Americans are more likely to use the structure of ASA + CSA to console people.

And when it comes to consoling in situation 2 where the hearer's relative power is higher than that of the speaker and the two sides share the very far social distance, the situation is quite different. As we have just seen in Fig.2, 70% Americans in situation 2 make use of CSA+ASA to console the hearer, while no Chinese chooses to make use of the same structure to console the hearer. However, in Fig.3, in the same situation, we can find that 50% Chinese adopt the structure with ASA+CSA to console people, while no American chooses this structure at all.

The two phenomena are worth studying. We will discuss the reason in the following chapter.

3.2.1.4 Cental Speech Act in between-posed: ASA+CSA+ASA

As for this structure with the central speech act in between-posed, the central speech act is placed between the supporting details. It seems that the quantity of the supporting details is more than that of the cetral speech act, for example,

①小强，你妈妈说去给你买好吃的东西。别哭了，我带你看动画片！(C, S10)

② Hey, how are you doing? Are you ok? I'm sorry you are in this situation, but I can't help you. (AE, S2)

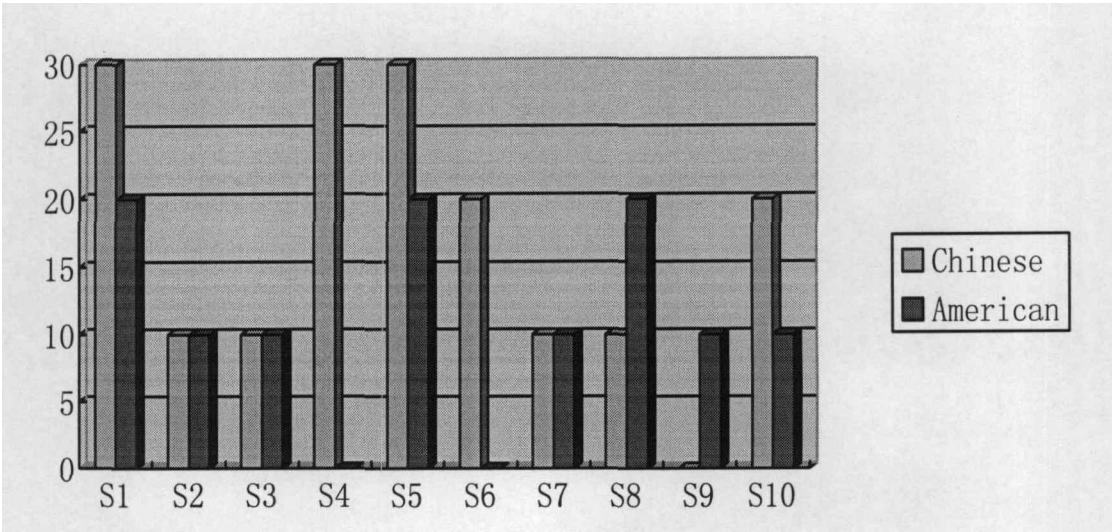The following figure is the result got from the questionnaire in Chinese and English.

Fig.4 ASA+CSA+ASA

Just from the figure above, 11% people will use the structure of ASA+CSA+ASA to express their consoling to the hearer. It can be seen that both the Chinese and American make use of this structure to console the hearer. Here, we are going to see situation 4, situation 6 and situation 9, situation 10 where either Chinese or Americans have not used this structure at all in these situations. In situation 4 and situation 6 where the speaker shares a close social distance with the hearer, the Chinese use this structure to express consoling while the Americans don't. In situation 9 and situation 10 where the speaker shares a far social distance with the hearer, the Americans use this struture to show their sumpathy and comfort while the Chinese don't.

3.2.1.5 Multiple Cental Speech Acts: CSAs

As for the structure with multiple central speech acts, the consoling sequence is expressed without any other supporting details. We can only see the very direct consoling. Just like the structure with the central speech act only, these expressions are very brief and short, for example,

① 茜茜，别哭，别哭，没事的。（C, S8）

② Calm down! Relax! (AE, S9)

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The following figure is the result got from the questionnaire in Chinese and English.
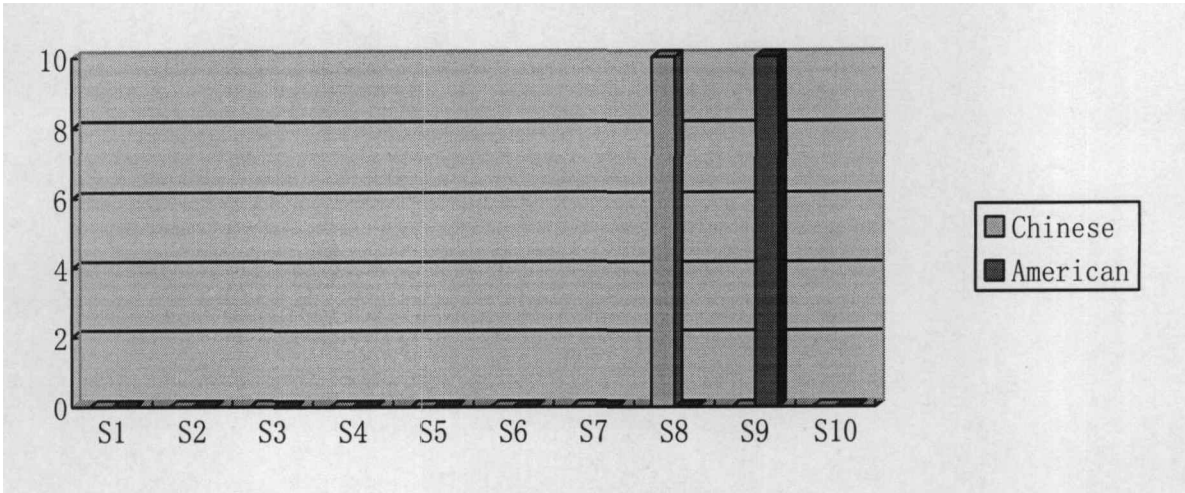

Fig.5 CSAs

From the above chart here, we can see that it is rare for both the Chinese and Americans to use several central consoling speech acts to convey their consoling without any supporting details. In the 200 chosen samples in Chinese and English, only two ones with multiple cental speech acts can be found. Specificly speaking, only 1% of people will choose this way. It seems that both the two do not like to use this structure. And as for these two samples, we can see that it appears in situation 8 and situation 9, in which the speaker shares a far social distance with the hearer. The tone can be seen as very being very direct.

3.2.1.6 No Cental Speech Act: ASA only

As for the structure with no central speech act, the whole consoling sequence is expressed without the central speech act. Even though the sequence lacks the central speech act and the expression is very indirect, it is still not difficult for us to feel the sense of consoling, for example,

①生命的意义在于在有限的时间里，让它绽放出最美丽的一面。(C, S5)

② I think you should dump him away. He is not good for you. Your true love will not treat you like that! (AE, S1)

The following figure is the result got from the questionnaire in Chinese and English.
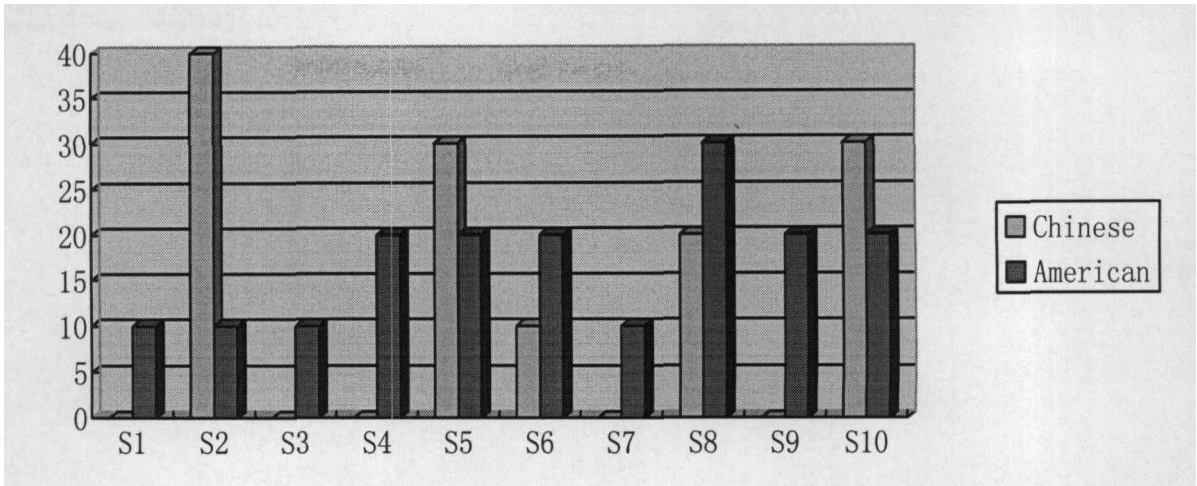
Fig.6 ASA

From the figure here, we know that only 14.5% people choose to use the structure with only the auxiliary speech act. And it can be seen that 17% Americans use this structure and 12% Chinese adopt this structure. It seems that both the Chinese and Americans sometimes make use of the structure with only the ASA without the central speech act. In this structure, no clear central speech act can be seen. However, it can still be seen from the figure that more Americans make use of this structure to convey their consoling than the Chinese. The consoling under this structure seems quite indirect. It can be seen that in all sitiations, we can see the structure used by the Americans. While for the Chinese, as we can see in situation 2 where the speaker is going to console his/her friend's sick father, it is clear that they use this structure more when they console the one with the higher relative power than in any other situations.

3.2.1.7 The summary

At first let us see a figure ("C" stands for the structure with central speech act; "A" stands for the one with the auxiliary speech act).
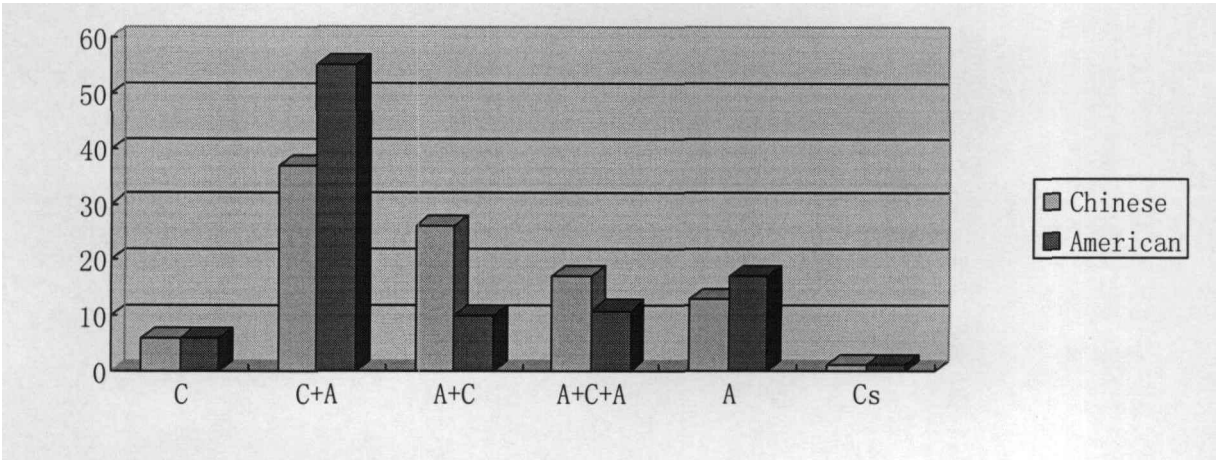

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Fig. 7 the structures of the central speech acts and the auxiliary speech act

From the figure of the central speech act and the auxiliary speech act, it is not difficult for us to see that most Americans prefer to express their consoling to the hearer by making using of the structure of the central speech act together with the auxiliary speech act. Besides this, the structure with the auxiliary speech act pre-posed is another good choice for the Americans. And at the same time, we can see from the figure that the Chinese are keen on both the structure with the auxiliary post-posed and the one with the auxiliary pre-posed. And the structure with the central speech act together with the auxiliary speech act is still the most frequently used one by the Chinese as well.

To sum up, it goes without saying from the analysis that when consoling people, Chinese prefer to use the structure with the auxiliary speech act post-posed while Americans prefer to use the one with the auxiliary speech act pre-posed..

3.2.2 The strategy types of the Central Speech Act

When facing the person who is in grief, sorrow or disappointment, people will choose to console him/her either in a direct way or indirect way. In this paper, the strategy types of the consoling speech act can be divided into direct consoling and indirect consoling according to the level of transparency of the speaker's intention and his/her literal force. The more closely the intention is linked with the literal force, the more direct consoling strategy of the central speech act will be adopted by the speaker. The direct consoling is aimed at consoling the hearer who is in grief, sorrow or disappointment straight. And as for the indirect consoling, it is to console the one who is in grief, sorrow or disappointment in an indirect way. We have two specific types for the indirect consoling. They are conventional indirect consoling and non-conventional indirect consoling.

If the hearer is very sad, the direct consoling can be "Don't be sad!", "Don't be disappointed!", "It is okay", "没事！", "不要难过！" and so on. Under the same circumstances, the indirect consoling could be "Being sad is no use.", "Everything will be all right.", "没有什么好伤心的", "人生伤心是难免的！", and so on.

Here are some examples cited from the samples:

Examples for the direct consoling:

1) 不要伤心！将来一切会好的，你会找到真正属于你的另一半。(C, S1)

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2) <u>你不要太难过了</u>。那是自然灾害嘛！谁也没有办法阻止，你不是还有我们嘛？！(C, S7)

3) <u>Don't worry</u>! Mommy is gonna be home by tomorrow, she just has to do something for toninght. How about we play a game right now? (AE, S10)

4) Lily, <u>it is okay</u>. Everything will be alright. Do not let a guy get the best of you. Do not be sad, he is the one that is missing out. Let's go out and forget about everything. (AE, S1)

In these four consoling sequences, we see the underlined part is the central speech act of each sequence. All the four central speech acts are direct and brief. They are direct consoling.

And examples for the indirect consoling are as follows:

1) <u>人生有许多部分组成，有快乐，也有痛苦</u>。不管什么都会过去的。我们要勇敢面对，可能你今天沮丧，但不可能永远这样，所以赶快好起来，这才是上策。(C, S1)

2) 叔叔，生病是很很正常的，谁都会生病，所以没有必要把它看那么严重。<u>只要您遵从医生的，您一定会好起来的</u>。(C, S2)

3) <u>你不是还有我们这些兄弟姐妹吗</u>？！(C, S7)

4) <u>Maybe this is what God wants for us</u>. I will pray for you everysay. We will stay together. (AE, S5)

5) <u>What a shock to hear this</u>! I know you are in great sorrow now, but your family would not be happy to see you so sad you know. So you need to let go and move on. (AE, S7)

6) <u>You can tell me your problems.</u> (AE, S7)

In the above four consoling sequences, we can see that the underlined central speech acts are very indirectly conveyed by the speaker to console the hearer.

The example one, two, four, and example five are conventional indirect consoling. Alothough they are not very direct, but they contain the factors of consoling the heaer who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. The expressions appeared in these consoling sequences are consistent with our daily habit. Take the third one for example; the speaker's intention is to tell the hearer that it is okay, or it doesn't matter, or something like this. But he/she conveyed his/her intention in an indirect way which is to tell the hearer that the thing has been arranged and developed like this, and we need not worry too much or be sad. All these four central speech acts are conventional indirect consoling

here.

And the example three and example six are non-conventional indirect consoling. Take the third one for example; the intention of the speaker here is to tell the hearer that he/she is not necessary to worry or not be sad because he/she has the support and concern from the speaker's side and the speaker as well as his/her friends are just like the hearer's sisters and brothers. But the tone in this example is not as soft as the one we have been supposed to be used to console the one who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. It seems that the tone is a little bit serious. Usually, when we console the one who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment, we show our patience and are as gentle and soft as we can. So the tone here is not consistent with the way we usually adopt to console people. Then in this paper, the consoling sequence like this has been considered as the non-conventional consoling. And just beause it somehow obeys the convetion, this kind of consoling is not frequently used by people unless the speaker is sure that their relationship is quite close and only in this way can he/she give the best sympathy or comfort to the hearer who is not happy or disappointed. .

From the samples in the Chinese and English questionnaire, we have got 85 central speech acts in the 100 English consoling sequences and 87 ones in the 100 Chinese consoling sequences. Now we are going to see the distribution of the direct consolings and the indirect consolings form these central speech acts.
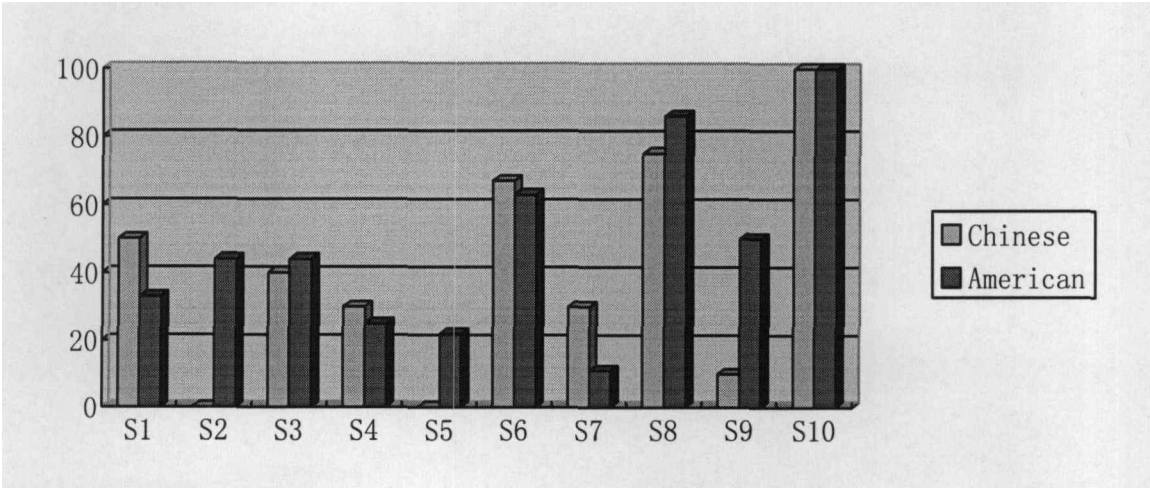
3.2.2.1 Direct Consoling

Fig.8. the direct consoling of the central speech act

From the figure here, we can see that 46% central speech acts of consoling in English are direct ones, while 40% central speech acts of consoling in Chinese are direct ones. And in situation 2 where the relative power of the hearer is higher than that of the

speaker and in situation 5 where the hearer shares a very far social distance with the speaker, we can see that no Chinese use the direct central speech acts of consoling to express their sympathy or comfort.
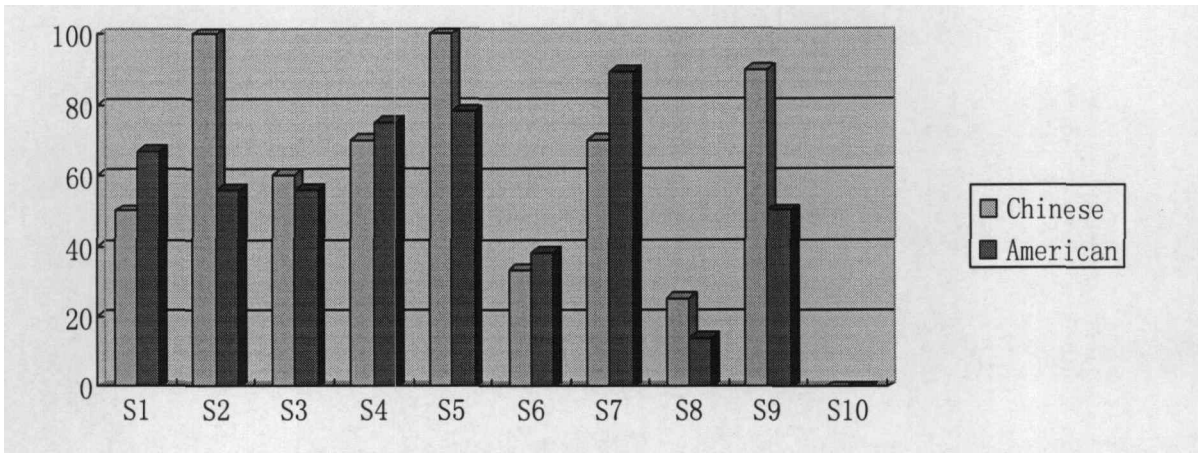
3.2.2.2 Indirect Consoling

Fig.9. the indirect consoling of the central speech act

From this figure here, it can be seen that 60% Chinese choose to make use of the indirect way to express their central consoling speech acts, while the 54% Americans choose to make use of this way to achieve the same effcets. From the two statistics here, we can say that the Chinese are more indirect when they express their consoling to the hearer than the Americans.

We have mentioned that the indirect consoling has been divided into two types: the conventional indirect consoling and the non-conventional indirect consoling. The following two figures are concerning the conventional indirect consoling of the central speech act and the non-conventional indirect consoling of the central speech act. We are going to get some information from the two figures below.
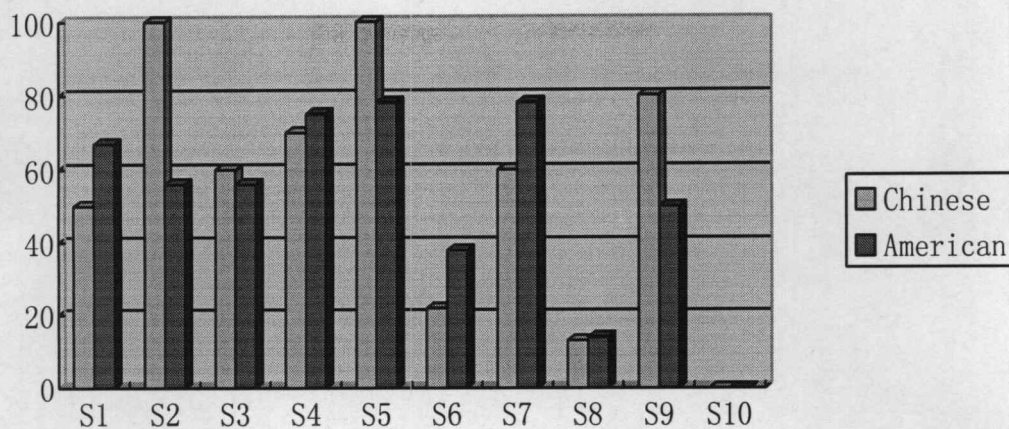
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Fig.10 the conventional indirect consoling of the central speech act
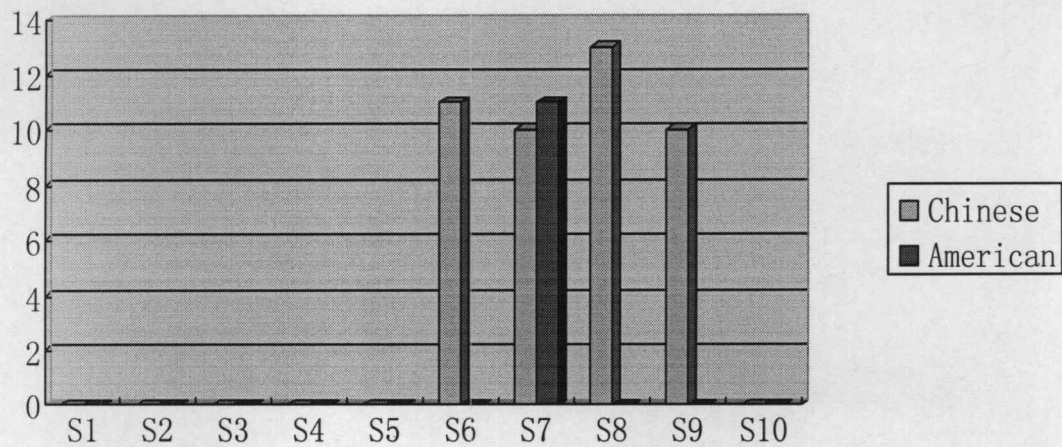
Fig.11 the non-convetional in direct consoling of the central speech act

From the two figures, we can see that about 54% people choose the conevetional consoling to express their their sympathy or comfort. And only 3% people adopt the non-convetional way to console the hearer.

3.2.2.3 Summary

Through the analysis of the strategy types of the central speech acts of consoling, it can be seen the direct consoling and conventional indirect consoling are usually the preferred choice for both the Chinese and the Americans while the non-conventional one is rarely adopted by people from the two cultures. It is easy for us to draw a conslusion from the analysis that both the Chinese and the Americans are customed to making use of the conventional indirect consoling when they show sympathy or comfort to the hearer who is in grief, sorrow or disappointment. However, from the given statistics, we

still can see that when consoling people, Americans are a little more direct, while the Chinese is a little more indirect.

3.2.3 Forms of Central Speech Act

From the samples, there are mainly three forms of the central consoling speech act. They are:

1) Imperatives ("I" will be used to stand for imperative in the figure).

2) Declaratives ("D" will be used to stand for declaratives in the figure);

3) Rhetorical question ("R"will be used to stand for rhetorical question in the figure);

4) Exclamatory sentence ("E"will be used to stand for exclamatory sentence in the figure)
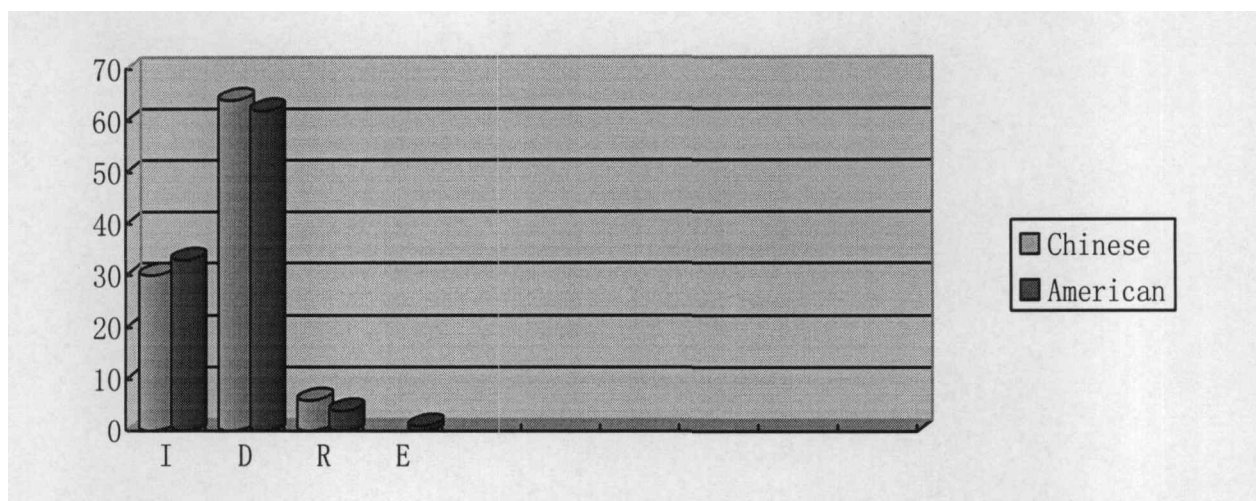
Fig.12 Forms of Central Speech Act

From this figure, about 63% people in the two cultures choose the declaratives to express the consoling to the one who is not happy. And 64% Chinese adopt declaratives while 62% Americans choose the same form of central consoling speech act. We can know from the statistics that both for the Chinese and the Americans, declaratives are the most freuqently used form of the central consoling speech act respectively. And 31% people choose to use the imperatives to console people. For both, the second frequently adopted form of the central consoling speech act is the imperatives. About 30% Chinese use the imperatives and 33% Americans make use of the same form of central consoling speech act.

And it seems that when consoling the person who is in grief, sorrow, or

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disappointment, the Chinese tend to use the declaratives a little more frequently than the Americans from the figure.

3.2.3.1 Imperatives

What we have learned just now is that imperatives are the second frequenctly used forms of the central consoling speech act. Now we are going to see the specific distribution of imperatives in each situaions. The following figure is just concerning the distribution.
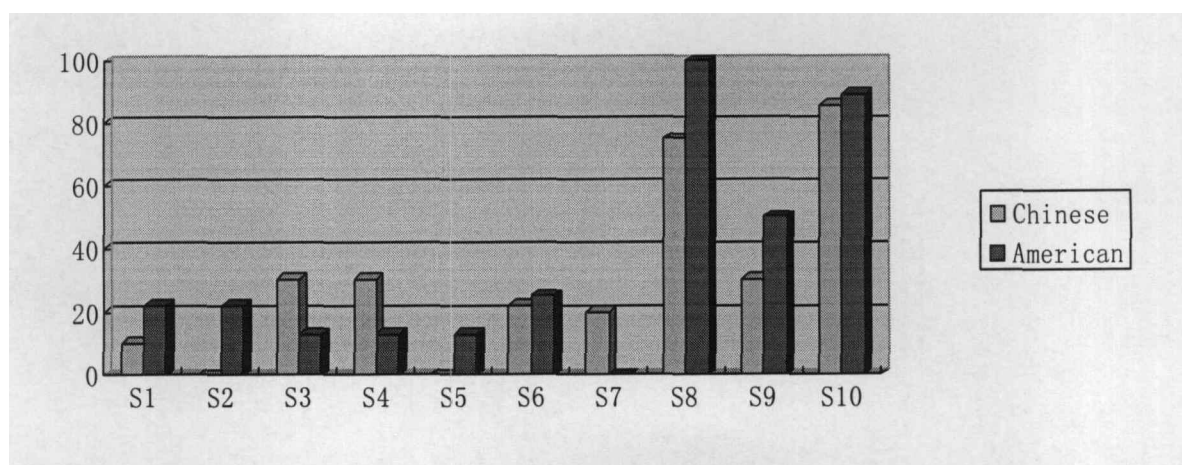
Fig.13 imperatives

From this figure, we can see clearly that imperatives appear in situation 8 and situation 10 where the speaker is asked to console the little child. And most of the imperative sentence has used the negative froms, for example,

1) Don't cry. I will buy you sugars. (AE, S8)

2) Don't cry. Your Mom will be here right now. (AE, S10)

3) 茜茜，不哭不哭！哭得像小花猫就不好看了。(C, S8)

4) 强强，别哭！我带你去玩，你爸爸一会儿就回来了。 (C, S10)

All the underlined central speech acts are imperatives. And we can see that all of them here are in negative form. The tone of consoling is very direct. The expression here is also very brief.

3.2.3.2 Declaratives

The following figure is about the distribution of declaratives which is the most popular form of central consoling speech act when consoling people. Its distribution in the ten situations will tell us a lot of useful information.
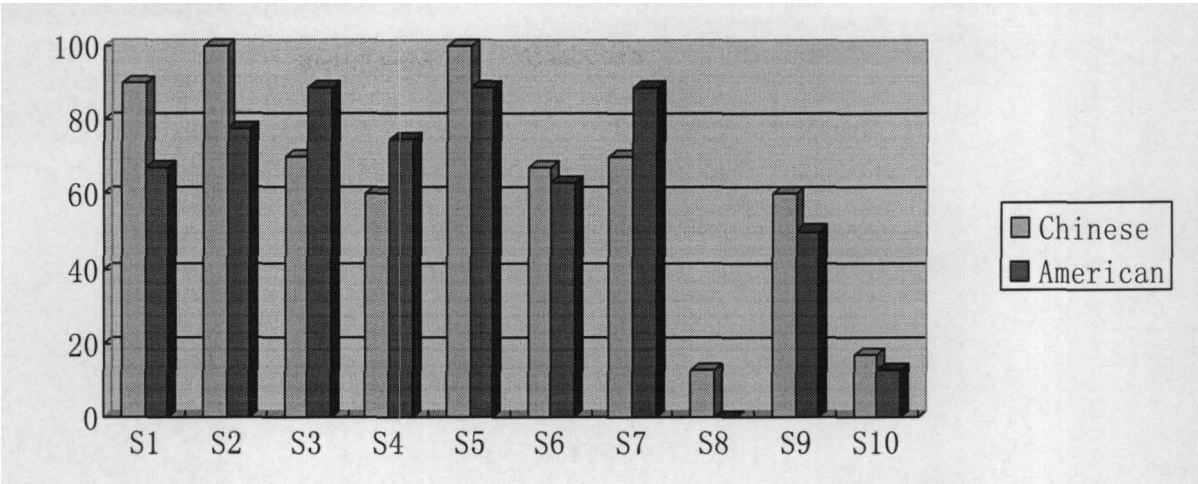
Fig.14. declaratives

From this figure, it can be seen that when the speaker consoles the one who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment, he/she usually makes use of the declaratives. We can find that the speaker will choose the declaratives to console the speaker when the relative power of the hearer is higher than or equal to that of the speaker. People rarely choose to make use of the declaratives to console the one whose relative power is lower than the speaker. Now we are going to see some examples of the declaratives.

1) I'm really sorry. If there is anything I can do, just tell me. I am here for you. You are a strong man. You will pull through. (AE, S2)

2) Not the worst, at least we still have hope. Let's work out what we should do with the doctor. (AE, S3)

3) 善待自己！为一个不值得的人这样，没什么意义。感情这种事情，看开了，也会觉得无所谓，相信时间会证明一切。 (C, S1)

4) 老李， 没有关系嘛！不就是当班长嘛?!当了班长，还不是为大家卖力嘛！不是班长，你也可以去帮助同学呀，你也许比班长的"地位"更高呢！别灰心！ (C, S6)

All the underlined central speech acts are declaratives. And we can see that the tone of consoling here is softer and gentler than the imperatives.

3.2.3.3 Rhetorical Questions and Exclamatory Sentence

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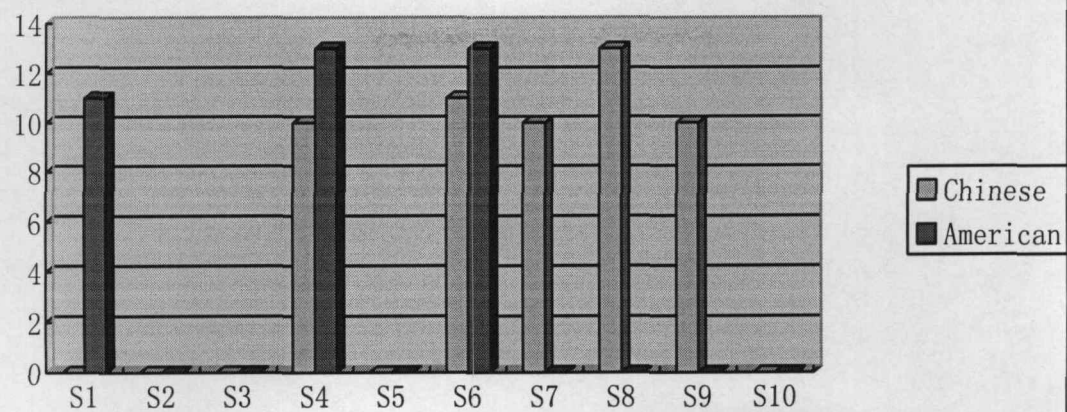
Fig.15 rhetorical question
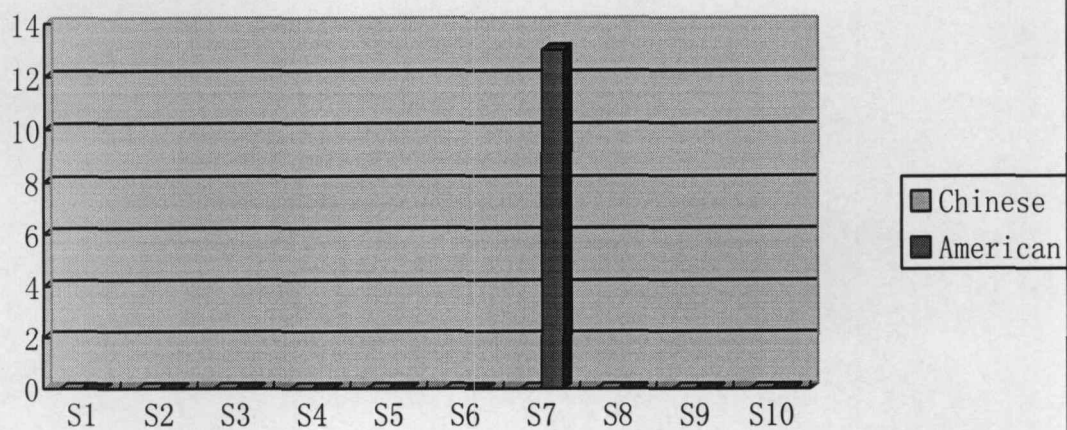
Fig.16 exclamatory sentence

From these two figures, we see that only about 5% people choose the rhetorical question to console the hearer who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment, and only 0.6% people choose the exclamatory sentence to do so. So we can know that it is not frequent for people to choose the rhetorical question and exclamatory sentence to console a person who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. Especially the exclamatory sentence, it is rather rare for people to use this from of central consoling speech act.

3.2.3.4 Summary

Form the above analysis, it can be concluded that the dominant form of consoling speech act is declaratives. That is to say, when people show sympathy or comfort to people who are in grief, sorrow, or disappointment, they prefer to use the declaratives. Besides declaratives, people still choose to use the imperatives, rhetorical question as well as the exclamatory sentence to achieve the same effects.

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3.2.4 Types of Auxiliary Speech Act

The auxiliary speech act can appear before or after the central speech act, which is to lessen or strengthen the central consoling speech act. Sometimes, when we don't have central consoling speech act in a consoling sequence, the auxialiary speech act which contains the factors of consoling will be considered as the central speech act. And as we know the auxiliary speech act holds no impact on the directness of the central consoling speech act. According to its pragmatic functions, the auxiliary speech act can be divided into the following types:

1) Grounders.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to give the reasons for the central consoling speech acts. From the chosen samples, it is not difficult for us to see that the reasons offered by the speaker are usually objective and impersonal. This kind of reason can be seen as good reasons. It can strengthen the comfort and ease of the hearer who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment if comparing it with the bad excuse. For example,

① 其实你不是孤单一个人啊，你还有我们，爱你的同学和老师，还有全世界那么多人的关心帮助，你有一个温暖的大家庭。(C, S7)

② It's okay, uncle. There are other jobs you can do. Try to learn something else and start a new career. You can't let this bring you down! (AE, S4)

2) Suggestions.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to give the hearer some suggestions so as to be cheered. Usually the suggestions appear after the central consoling speech act. The speaker tells a way for the heaer to do to escape from the bad mood or the things which make him/her unhappy. For example,

① 没关系啊！班长又不是只有这一次竞选机会，以后加油点。下次你一定会成功的！(C, S6)

② There are so many chances. All you have to do is to try your best and thing will get better. (AE, S9)

3) Encouragement.

This type of auxiliary speech act is added to support the hearer and give encouragement to strenthen the central speech act. The position of this type of auxiliary speech act can be either in front of or after the central speech act. The hearer who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment will be encouraged to overcome the bad mood and face

the difficulties bravely. For example,

① 其实，很多事情本身不是那么可怕的，真正可怕的是我们的认识和看法，不是有很多不知内情的人战胜了这种可恶的疾病吗？其实快乐才是一剂良药，<u>我来和你共同面对它、战胜它。相信你、相信我!</u> (C, S3)

② Don't be depressed by a small failure like this! <u>You will pass it next time.</u> (AE, S4)

4) Regret.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to tell the speaker's feeling towards sadness of the loss of the hearer who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. Usually, under this circumstance, the hearer gets frustrated by some matters or has lost something or somebody very important for him/her. Then the speaker begins to console him/her with the central consoling speech act together with the auxiliary one which is to show the speaker's feeling of sadness of his/her loss. For example,

① <u>虽然你的父母不在了</u>，但关心你的人可是越来越多了，大家同样爱你、关心你。(C, S7)

② <u>I can not believe this happened to your family.</u> I really feel sorry. But you gotta move on. (AE, S7)

5) Sympathy.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to share the feeling of others and show the feeling of pity and sorrow for others. We can show our sympathy to the other person who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment at any time when necessary. From this perspective, it has differences with regret. For example,

① 叔叔，很抱歉，之前都没有时间来看望您，希望您不要介意。<u>现在看您躺在这里，真的挺心痛的</u>。我和小张就像亲姐妹一样。虽然是初次见您，却感到十分亲切，希望您早日康复。(C，S2)

② What a shock to hear this! <u>I know you are in great sorrow now</u>, but your family would not be happy to see you so sad, you know. So you need to let go and move on. (AE, S7)

6) Conventional verbal exchange.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to pave the way for the central consoling speech act or the auxiliary speech act which can reflect the speaker's consoling intention. Usually it has nothing to do with the consoling speech act. It is just some words which

are used to warm up the main topic. From the sample got from the questionnaire, we find that the conventional verbal exchange only exists in Chinese. And at the same time, we can see that this type of auxiliary speech act only appears in situation 2 where the hearer who is going to be consoled has higher relative power than that of the speaker and this hearer shares a far social distance with the speaker. It is a very unique phenomenon in Chinese. For example,

① 张伯父好！<u>我很早就敬仰您的坚定信念了。本想早早来拜见您，但我也在忙学习，同事您也一直在忙，所以一直没有机会。</u>其实，我这次来就是祝您早日康复的，像您这样有健康心理的人，身体也一定会很快恢复的。(C, S2)

② 伯父，<u>我看到你，就觉得您是一个可以走过一切的阻碍的强人。</u>加油，好起来哦！(C, S2)

7) Folk wisdom.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to make use of the maxim, proverb or a concisely expressed precept or general truth to console the one who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. The folk wisdom is the essence of the native culture. True, it is very brief and short, but it tells a lot and can teach human being a lot. It always has a deep impact on the hearer when being used to console people. For example,

① 天涯何处无芳草，曾经沧海难为水。(C, S1)

② <u>There are plenty more fish in the sea</u>. You should take a break from boys for now, but try not to worry about it. You can do better than him. (AE, S1)

8) Lyrics.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to make use of the lyrics to console the one who is not happy. From the samples of the questionnaire both in Chinese and English, only one consoling sequence has been added the lyrics of pop songs to console the friend who needs consoling. And we can see that the lyrics are from a song of a Chinese singer whose name is Jingru, Liang. It is not difficult for us to find that the meaning of the lyrics is quite close to the thing which makes the hearer feel unhappy or frustrated. For example,

他要走就让他走吧！<u>离开旧爱，像坐慢车，挥别错的才能和对的相遇。</u>长痛不如短痛，痛快结束。重新开始，你会找到更好的。(C, S1)

9) Expectations.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to express an expectation to the hearer who is in

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grief, sorrow or disappointment. These expectations seem very positive. The speaker will give the hearer confidence and strength by putting forward his/her good expectations to the hearer. The expectations can be seen more in Chinese than in the American questionnaire. For example,

① 叔叔，希望您能好点，早日康复！ （C，S2）

② I hope you will get better soon. I will buy you a bear when you get out here. (AE, S5)

10) Questioning.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to ask some questions concerning the things or moods which make the hearer feel disappointed or unhappy. The tone is very indirect and soft, but the questions regarding the things or moods happened to him/her can give the hearer a consolation that he/she is concerned or paid enough attention by others. From the analysis, we find that the Americans like to make use of the questioning better than the Chinese. For example,

① 茜茜最乖、最坚强！不会哭的，对不对？茜茜好棒！哥哥带你去吃冰激凌。 （C，S8）

② Are you ok? I know we are not good friendsbut I am so sad! Please let's get to know each other more, ok? (AE, S5)

11) Promise.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to make a promise to the hearer who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. The promise is a spiritual support. It is always positive. The purpose to make the promise is to make the hearer become confident and feel that even if he/she is in trouble, he/she can count on his/her friend, the speaker. Sometimes a promise from friends, family members, colleagues, or even a promise from a stranger can be a very good way to console a hurt soul of human. For example,

① 老婆，不管你还能活多久，我都不会让你放弃治疗的，我会一直陪在你身边。不用怕，你还有我！(C, S3)

② Don't worry. You are not alone. I will always work with you to fight until we get over it. (AE, S3)

12) Threat.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to make use of threat to stop the hearer from the current grief, sorrow, or disappointment. Usually the hearer has a lower relative power than that of the speaker. And we can see another same response in situation 3 where the

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speaker is going to console his/her sick spouse. The two share a very close social distance with each and they are equal in the life. It is not very natural for us to use this way to console a person who is not happy or frustrated. However, it does exist in daily conversation. When we use this way, we should pay special attention to it. If not, we may annoy the hearer or even make the hearer more disappointed and frustrated. For example,

① 大灰狼来咯！大灰狼专门抓哭鼻子的男子汉呀！不哭的话，妈妈就会买东西给我们的小男子汉哦！ (C, S10)

② 算了，别伤心了。你伤心，我就更伤心。你不想看我那么伤心吧？！(C, S3)

③If you don't get up, I am leaving you! (AE, S8)

13) Exculpations.

This type of auxiliary speech act is to find excuses for the loss of the hearer. The speaker tries to find the exculpations to make the one who is diappointed or frustrated feel relaxed and calm down. Even though the hearer has failed, the exculpations will make him/her believe that it is not so serious to fail or lose. And if he/she has another try, he will gain success and get what he/she wants. For example,

① 当班长得罪人，还耽误学习呢！ (C, S6)

② It's ok and it is not all about to win but you can try your best next time.. (AE, S6)

The above thirteen types of auxiliary speech act are not fixed in use. In a consoling sequence, we can see consoling sequence with only one auxiliary type and it is very natural for us to see a sequence with the combination of several one of them as well. Under more circumtances, the types are combined to console the one who is unhappy or disappointed.

3.2.5 Microunit

Microunits are used to modify the central speech act and the auxiliary speech act. Now we are going to study the microunits from three factors: the address terms, the demonstrative words, and the upgraders. When we study the upgraders, we are going to focus on the adverbs and the commitment indicator.

3.2.5.1 Address Terms

Address Terms are most frequently used in daily communication. It tells people a

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lot about the social distance and relative power of the parties involved in the communication. The address terms shows different use frequencies in Chinese questionnaire and the American one. Now we are going to see the distribution of the address terms in the chosen samples.
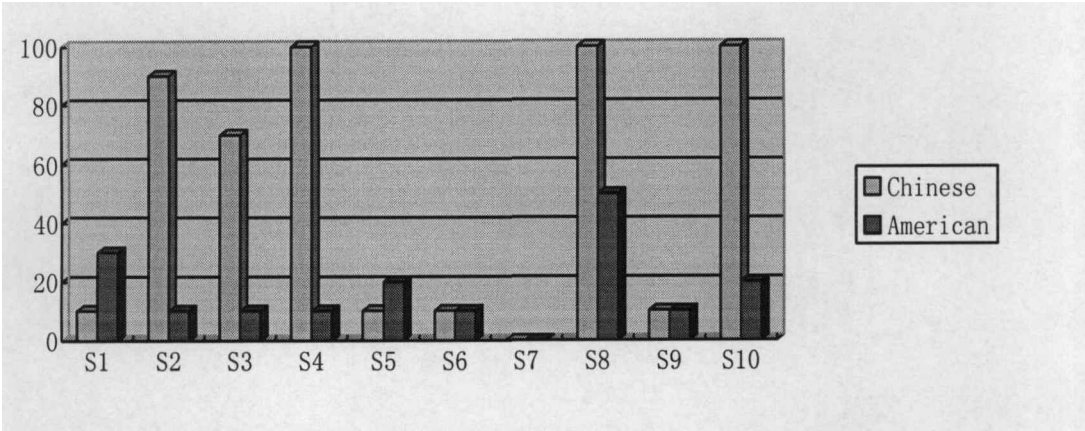

Fig.17 Address terms

From the above figure, we can see that 43% Chinese adopt address terms when they console the people who are in grief, sorrow, or disappointment and only 17% Americans make use of the address terms when consoling people. From the figure, the Chinese use the address terms more in situation 2, situation3, situation 4, situation 8 and situation10. We have known that in situation 2 and situation 4, the hearer has a higher relative power than that of the speaker. And in situation 8 and situation 10, it is still clear to see that the hearer has a lower relative power than that of the speaker. From the figure here, we can see that in situation 8 and situation 10, almost 100% Chinese use the address terms. However, it is not of the same results even under the same circumstances where the speaker has a relative higher social status than that of the hearer in American context. It seems that the Americans seldom use the address terms when consoling people. More often, they use no-naming when consoling others.

Even though it has great difference in using the address terms, it is still quite easy for us to see that neither the Chinese nor the American adopt the address terms in situation 7. In situation 7, the speaker and the hearer are equal in the society, but the hearer has a far social distance with the speaker. From this point of view, we can say that people prefer to use no-naming when they console one they are not familiar with.

As for the address terms in the questionnare, they are a necessity of politeness. They are either used to draw the hearer's attention or strengthen the sincerity of the speaker when consoling. They can be divided into the following types:

1) Title/ Social role

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① <u>叔叔</u>，生病嘛是很正常的，谁都会生病，所以没有比亚把它看那么严重。只要遵从医生的，您一定会好起来的。(C, S2)

② It's okay, <u>uncle</u>. There are other jobs you can do. Try to learn something else and start a new career. You can't let this bring you down. (AE, S4)

2) Kinship terms

This type of address terms can almost only be seen in the Chinese questionnaire.

① <u>舅舅</u>，不就是考试不及格吗？我也有不过的时候呀，您比我坚强多得。出不了国，不是还可以跟我们相处吗？(C, S4)

② <u>舅舅</u>，没事的。英语其实也不难，您回去再好好学一下，明年再考，一定能考过的。不是都说好事多磨吗？(C, S4)

3) First name

This type of address terms can almost only be seen in the American questionnaire. If we use the Chinese name with three Chinese characters, the result may be different. But according to the current results, no Chinese use the first name in the consoling sequence. For example,

① <u>Lily</u>, it's ok. Every thing will be alright. Don't let a guy get the best of you. Don't be sad. He is the one that's missing out. Let's go out and forget about everything. Life is short so don't waste your time on someone that is not worth it. (AE, S1)

② Hey <u>Jullin</u>. I know we are not the best friends but I hope you are going to be okay. No worries. You will bew fine. (AE, S5)

4) Surname with the first name

According to the result, this type of address terms is not frequently seen. Only 0.5% people use this type. The only one example is cited here.

① <u>朱琳</u>，我们会在你身边为你祈福、加油！血癌并不可怕，希望你能坚强起来。 (C, S5)

5) Endearment term

① 没事，<u>宝贝</u>。你一定会好的。相信我，你一定会没事的。(C, S3)

② <u>老李</u>，没有关系嘛！不就是班长嘛！当了班长还不是为大家卖力嘛？不是班长，你也可以去帮助同学呀，你也许比班长的"地位"更高呢！别灰心！(C, S6)

③ <u>茜茜</u>，你看看，大地母亲多爱你，她是想和你抱抱呢！别哭了哦！(C, S8)

④ <u>My friend</u>, I am so sorry that you got this thing, but I believe you will fight it away. (AE, S2)

⑤ Everything is gonna be all right, <u>my love</u>. We will not lose our hope no matter what happens. (AE, S3)

⑥ Go out and meet some nice girls, you gotta to be cheered up, <u>bro</u>! (AE, S9)

3.2.5.2 Demonstrative words

According to Brown & Levinson (1987) and Levinson (1983), the use of the demonstrative pronoun is a facework in the speech act. A great many consoling speech acts have alleges for the speaker, the hearer and the the matter itself. The hearer can be seen as either the insider or the outsider for the hearer. For example,

① No matter what happens, I will stay with you. We will not let <u>this</u> destroy our happniess. (AE, S3)

② Look at what you've goe; you are really better than me. So you really don't have to worry about your future. (AE, S9)

In the first example, the hearer is regarded as the insider for the speaker; while in the second example, the hearer is regarded as the outsider. If we consider the hearer as the insiders, the consoling sounds more effective, which can make the hearer have the feeling that no matter what happens, he/ she is not alone.

The demonstrative words in the samples can be divided into the following types:

1) The speaker orientation

① 多难兴邦，这句话不仅适用于一个国家，也适用于我们每个人。<u>我</u>坚信你会好起来的。 (C, S7)

② <u>I</u> brought you some flower and food. Are you ok? <u>I</u>'ll bring homework and updates about schaool. <u>I</u> hope you feel better. I'm so worried about you. (AE, S5)

2) The hearer orientation

① 伯父，前几天听说<u>您</u>病了，今天特意来探望一下。<u>您</u>一定要战胜病魔，赶快好起来，再做那个身体强壮的人，不要被它吓倒啊！(C, S2)

② What gone have gone, it's not <u>your</u> fault, and <u>you</u> will not make any difference worrying too much. (AE, S5)

3) Impersonal

① 世界上<u>好男人</u>多的是，为他伤心不值得。(C, S1)

② It's ok, buddy. <u>Life</u> goes on. Better luch next time.

4) The consoling cause orientation

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① 没事的，忘了<u>他</u>吧！好男人多的是，再找一个也无妨。(C, S1)

② I can not believe this happened to <u>your family</u>. I really feel sorry. But you gotta move on. (AE, S7)

3.2.5.3 Upgraders

When people are performing the consoling speech act, the speaker soemtimes needs to express his/her direct sympathy or comfort and his/her sincerity to the hearer who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. At this moment, he will make use of some adverbs, certain commitment indicators as well as some uptoners to acieve this goal.

1) Adverbs

Adverbs are used to strengthen certain part of the consoling sequence. The frequently used adverbs are "很", "非常", "really", "definitely", and so on. For example,

① 我们会<u>一直</u>支持你的，加油。病痛<u>只是</u>暂时的，<u>很</u>快就会过去。(C, S5)

② I don't think they are better than you at all. You are <u>always</u> the best in my opinion. (AE, S6)

2) Commitment indicators

Th speaker sometimes makes use of the commitment indicators to show his/her firm expectation or pisitive support to the hearer. These commitment indicators may make the hearer feel spiritually supported or encouraged. For example,

① 舅舅，失败乃成功之母。下次你<u>一定</u>会成功的，加油！(C, S4)

② It won't be easy for you to get such a score like this. I <u>believe</u> if you keep trying, you will <u>denefinitely</u> make it. (AE, S4)

3) Uptoners

The uptoners in the consoling sequence are usually placed at the end of an utterance. It is used to draw attention of the speaker or strenthen the tone of support and encouragement. For example,

① 没有什么好伤心的？！就算不当班长，照样可以为其他同学服务<u>嘛</u>！再说，以后，机会多着<u>呢</u>！(C, S6)

② Sorry for what happened to you! But <u>hey</u>, look at what I've got for you! Hope these flowers bring you good luck. (AE, S5)

3.2.6 Summary

Through the comparative study of the consoling sequence in Chinese and English, we have found that the Chinese and the Americans have similarities and differences as well when they have to console someone who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment.

3.2.6.1 Similarities

1) The consoling sequence in both the Chinese and the American context contains the three aspects: the central speech act, the auxiliary speech act and the microunit. The existence of the consoling sequence is universal in Chinese and American context. At the same time, it is proved that the analysis mode of Blum-Kulka can be universally applied into the study of speech act.

2) In both the Chinese consoling sequences and the American ones, the strategy types of central speech act contain the two: direct consoling and the indirect one (the conventional indirect one and the non-convetional indirect one). The direct consoling and conventional indirect consoling are usually the preferred choice for both the Chinese and the Americans while the non-conventioal one is rarely adopted by people from the two cultures.And for the two, the more frequently used strategy is the conventional indirect consoling. Both the Chinese and the Americans are used to making use of the conventional indirect consoling when they show sympathy or comfort to the hearer who is in grief, sorrow or disappointment.

3) The auxiliary speech act is used to support the central consoling speech act. They are used before or after the central consoling speech act in order to console the one who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. The main form of central consoling speech act is declaratives in both the Chinese and the American context.

4) Thirteen types of the Auxiliary Speech Act can be concluded from the samples.In both the Chinese and American consoling sequences, the different types of auxiliary speech act can be combined freely.

5) We can see microunits, such as address terms, demonstative words and upgraders in the consoling sequence from both the contexts.

3.2.6.2 Differences

1) As for the structure of the central speech act and the auxiliary speech act, most Americans prefer to express their consoling to the hearer by making use of the structure

with the central speech act together with the auxiliary speech act. Besides this, the structure with the auxiliary speech act pre-posed is another good choice for the Americans. And at the same time, we can see from the figure that the Chinese are keen on both the structures with the auxiliary post-posed and the one with the auxiliary pre-posed. And the structure of the central speech act together with the auxiliary speech act is still the most frequently used one by the Chinese as well.

2) When it comes to the strategy type of central consoling speech act, we can see that when consoling people, Americans are a little more direct, while the Chinese is a little more indirect. Facing the one who needs consolation and has a higher realtive power than that of the speaker, the Chinese speaker chooses the conventional indirect consoling while the American not.

3) As for the form of central consoling speech act, a little more Chinese prefer the declatives while a little more Americans choose the imperatives, even though both use the declaratives more.

4) When it comes to the type of the auxiliary speech act, the conventional verbal exchange is of Chinese characteristics, while questioning is of the American characteristics.

5) The use of the address terms show differently under the Chinese and American context.

Chapter Four Reasons for the Discrepancies

Language and culture are closely linked. Different cultures have different subtle impact on the speech act of people living in the culture. The mode of speech act inevitably reflects the value concepts and norms of the culture. Consoling, as a speech act, will be no exception. The similarities and differences in its expression mode in the Chinese and American context will tell us a lot about the two cultures. And the cultures will give reasons for some of the differences.

4.1 Individulism and Collectivism

The value concept of individualism and collectivism hold a deep impact on language. So here we are going to learn something about individulism and collectivism in the Chinese and American culture.

4.1.1 The definition of the individualism and the collectivism

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (the 4th edition), the individualism is the belief that the rights and freedom of individual people are the most important rights in a society. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary (the 4th edition), the collectivism is a theory advocating the ownership and control of land and the means of production by the whole community or by the State, for the benefit of everyone.

From the definition, we know that the individualism emphasizes the individual person and advocates personal independence, freedom, equality. The interpersonal relationship is very loose. However, the collectivism emphasizes the harmony of the community. The individual should consider the benefits of the community first. The interpersonal relationship is quite close.

4.1.2 The differences reflected in Chinese and American culture

Hofstede (1980) has ever conducted a survey about the tendency of the individulism and collectivism in forty countries and regions. According to Jia Yuxin (1997:63), the first four countries with the strongest individualism tendency are America, Austrilia, British, and Canada. Hongkong and Taiwan have ranked the thirty-two and thirty-six. From this point of view, it can be seen that the value concept of

individualism-collectivism is quite different in Chinese and American culture. The Chinese culture is typically of the collectivism Characteristics while the American culture is typically the individualism one (Su Wenmiao, 2003:28).

The form of Chinese collectivism has something to do with the patriarchal clan system which is held by the traditional blood relations and served by 'Ren' and 'Li' in the Confucian culture. The patriarchal clan system pays attention to kinship (Jia Yuxin, 1997:161).the concept of 'Ren' foucuses on the relations between the individual and the community. It asks the indivudual to mingle himself/herself into the community. It emphasizes the kinship. "Li" pays attention to the ethics. It emphasizes the difference in the hierarchy and the rights and duties under the hierarchy. All these features tell that the Chinese society is a collectivism society which attaches great importance to the harmonious interpersonal relationship and the difference from the different ranks in the hierarchy as well. The individual interests can not surpass his/her identity under the hierarchy. The low level people have no rights to perform the act which is not consistent with the identity to the higher authorities. Even if the low level people have to do so, they have to follow the principle which is to respect others and devaluate himself/herself. The words should be as indirect as possible in order to show the difference in the rights.

Compared with the Chinese collectivism, the American culture concentrates on the individualism, paying attention to the equality. Individual interests, personal rights and freedom are of divinity. In the communication, the equality goes first prior to the relation based on the hierarchy. The communication between the higher authorities and the low level people, between friends, even between the senior people and the junior ones should be based on freedom, equality and the personal independence.

4.2 The high context culture and low context culture

The concept of the high context culture and low context culture is put forward by Hall (1976) based on the impact on the communication held by different cultures. According to Lebaron (2003), high context culture corresponds with the collectivism while the low context culture often exists in the environment with individualism. From the point of view of Jia Yuxin (1997:34), the Oriental culture belongs to the high context culture while the western culture belongs to the low context culture.

In the high context culture, the collectivism surpasses the individualism. People honor the harmonious social relation. When communicating in this kind of culture,

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people should pay attention to parataxis, connotation and implicitness. In the low context culture, the individualism surpasses the collectivism. People honor the resist, competiotion, self-demenstration and equality. When communicating in this kind of culture, people should pay attention to the explanation in words, explicitness and conciseness.

4.3 Cultures and the Consoling Speech Act

Consoling is a speech act. It is an unavoidable phenomenon in communication. At the same time, as a language phenomenon, its expression owns the cultural characteristics inevitably. It has close relation with cultures. The following content will comcentrate on the differences of consoling speech act from the angle of culture.

When we analyze the consoling speech act from the angle of the Chinese and American culture, we will focus on the differences. And we are going to discuss the differences reflected in the position of the auxiliary speech act, the strategy types of central consoling speech act, and the use of address terms.

4.3.1 The position of the auxiliary speech act

The consoling speech act is a semantic sequence which is made up of the central speech act, the auxiliary speech act and the microunit. In this sequence, the use of the auxiliary speech act reflects different cultures when used in performing the consoling seech act. In Chinese context, the auxiliary speech act of consoling appears prior to the central consoling speech act more, especially in those situations where the hearer has a higher relative power than that of the speaker. And in American context, the auxiliary speech act is more frequently placed behind the central consoling speech act. The difference in the position of the auxiliary speech act has something to do with the difference of the Chinese and western culture and their thinking mode. In the low context culture, the westerners honor the explanation in words, the direct communication. As for their thinking mode, the westerners are good at deducing, preferring the way of topic-first. While for the Chinese living under the high context culture, they pay attention to the harmonious social relationship. When communicating, they emphasize the implicitness. When they state a subject, they usually adopt the way of inductive reasoning. That is to say, the topic appears in a way of topic-delayed. Using the structure with the auxiliary speech act pre-posed is a way to convey the consoling implictly. The

the central consoling speech act appears in the latter and it has reflected the characteristics of Chinese culture and their thinking mode.

The above analysis will give a reasonable reason why no Chinese adopt the structure with the auxiliary speech act pre-posed in situation 2 where the speaker is going to console a man who has a higher relative power than that of the speaker.

4.3.2 The strategy types of central consoling speech act

In the preceding chapter, we have learned that when it comes to the strategy type of central consoling speech act, Americans are a little more direct, while the Chinese are a little more indirect. As for the reason, it also has something to do with the high context culture and the low context culture. In the low context culture, the westerners honor the explanation in words, the direct communication when communicating. Therefore, it's very natural for the Americans to use the direct way to show their sympathy or comfort to the one who is in grief, sorrow, or disappointment. While in the high context culture, people emphasize the implicitness when communicating. That's why the Chinese prefer the indirect consoling.

Here we have to take the second situation as an example again. The strategy of central consoling speech act the Chinese have taken in this situation is very indirect, implicit and seems very polite.

4.3.3 The use of address terms

The address terms in the consoling sequence also reflect the distinct features of culture. In the Chinese consoling sequence, we can often see the address terms. And the address terms in Chinese consoling sequence are always very complicated. We have a lot of kinship terms, such as "舅舅"、"老婆"、"叔叔"、"大伯", and so on. At the same time we have a host of non-kinship terms, such as "朱琳"、"小丽"、"傻瓜","老李" and so on. Even we can see some terms influenced by the modern fashion, such as, "美女"、"帅哥"、"亲爱的"、"宝贝", and so on. Comparing with Chinese, the English address terms are simple and brief. They always choose to call the first name directly or use some terms like "sir", "Madam", "buddy", "bro", and so on.

These differences have something to do with the differences of Chinese culture and social hierarchy. Influenced by the concept of "Ren" and "Li", the Chinese pay special attention to the hierarchy. So the address terms in this culture reflect the differences

between the higher authorities and the low level group. When facing the one with higher relative power, the correct use of address terms has been regarded as good manners. In addition, the Chinese society is formed based on the blood relation and clan. So using the terms relating to the kinship to address the family members, friends, even the strangers reflects the harmonious interpersonal relationship emphisized by the Chinese. We can see that the relationship is based on the collectivism. Using the kinship terms to address the hearer is to avoid the conflicts and regard the hearer as the insiders, which also reflects the kindheartedness of the Chinese and their concept of paying attention to the kinship. These concepts are of great differences from the Western one. In western society, people are influenced by the concept of equality. It is said in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal and all men are free from the day of birth. Consequently, they pay attention to the personal value and emphasize the equality in the interpersonal communication. They like to treat others equally and hope to be treated equally as well. When addressing other people, they seldom use the way: the title plus the family name. Sometimes, they address other people in a no-naming way. Usually they just call the first name, even between parents and Children, teachers and students. All these have reflected the individualism and equality-orientation in the western culture.

Chapter Five Conclusion

5.1 Summary

Consoling, a particular linguistic phenomenon, universally exists. No matter how high our social status is, no matter where we are, consoling will be used in our daily communication and can be seen in the movies, television and literature works. Timely and effective consoling will make the person who is in grief, sorrow, disappointment recover quickly, get happy and become optimistic about the life again. Even sometimes it can be helpful to save a person's life or soul and guard the harmony of the family as well as the stability of the society. It is obvious that consoling is a necessity of human society. However, it is not a heritage of human being. That is the reason why we need to study consoling to help people to convey their sympathy or comfort more effectively, making them become a better user of consoling.

So far, a number of speech acts still wait to be explored. The study of consoling speech act belongs to one of these. Rare articles concerning the consoling speech act can be seen. It can be believed that the study of consoling speech act will improve the interpersonal relations and facilitate the cross-culture communication.

In the paper, I have given a general introduction of consoling, compared the similarities and differences of consoling between American and Chinese cultures and analyzed the underlying reasons for the discrepancies.

The paper begins with a consideration of speech acts and politeness theories with a view to shed more light on consoling speech act. To study the consoling speech act in communication, speech act theory will serve as a basis to study it. At the same time, we must combine the speech act with the context, so the politeness theories must be taken into account as well.

Then this paper comes up with a definition of consoling which is suitable for the further contrastive study. Based on the definition, I designed questionnaire by using Discourse-completion Test which is the dominant data collection method to study speech acts. After that, I picked out all the target samples from the questionnaire according to the definition, from which I randomly chose 100 samples in Chinese and English respectively. Then on the basis of the experimental framework offered by Brown & Levinson and the analysis model of speech acts of Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger, consoling speech act of both Chinese and Americans are analyzed and compared

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from five aspects: 1) the structures of central speech acts and auxiliary speech acts, 2) the strategy types of the central speech act, 3) forms of the consoling central speech act, 4) types of the consoling auxiliary speech act and 5) microunit.

From the analysis, we have got the similarities and differences of consoling speech act in both cultures. The paper has figured out that when the Chinese console people, they prefer to use the structure with the auxiliary speech act pre-posed in a conventional indirect way. When expressing consoling, Americans are more direct than Chinese. At the same time, Chinese use the address terms more frequently than the Americans do.

Finally the paper draws a conclusion with an account of their underlying reasons for discrepancies. All these differences are caused by the different cultures in China and America.

It can be firmly believed that the success of this paper will help enrich the study of pragmatics. It will tell us that the experimental model of Brown & Levinson and the analysis model of speech acts of Blum-Kullka as well as Wood & Kroger can be applied to the study of speech act. The paper is expected to hold a positive influence on the future cross-culture communication.

5.2 The limitations of the study

Although a number of aspects have been investigated in this thesis, there still are some limitations that need improving:

(1) The first weakness of the thesis is the limited amount of data collected. Though they are adequate for a qualitative study, it would probably be better in the categorization of the types of the consoling speech act, for more data will guarantee a more convincing categorization.

(2) The study ignores the non-verbal strategy.

(3) In the contrastive analysis, this paper has taken the social distance and relative poewer into consideration. The factors such as the differences in age, gender and educational backgroun have been ignored.

5.3 The implications for the future study

In terms of the limitations of the study, the future study should increase the number of the questionnaires. If more consolings can be got from the literature works, the real daily communication, TV series and some other areas, the results of the contrastive study

will be more persuasive. And the study should take the non-verbal consoling strategy into consideration. In the process of contrastive analysis, more factors such as the differences in age, gender, educational backgroun, and so on are supposed to be included in the study.

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Appendix

1. Chinese Questionnaire

安慰用语使用情况调查问卷

亲爱的朋友：为了真实地了解安慰用语使用的情况，以便使之与英语语境下的安慰用语使用情况做出对比，对相应教学和跨文化交流起到指导作用，特设计此表。本次调查不记姓名，结果只用于研究，具体内容不对外公布（在此郑重保护您的隐私权利！）。答案无对错之分，请你根据自己的情况把答案如实的填写在空白处。谢谢你的支持与合作！

第一部分　个人情况：

1. 你的母语是：A 汉语　　　B 其他 ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿
2. 你的职业：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿
3. 你的年龄：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿
4. 你的性别：A 男　　　B 女

第二部分　话语补全

1. 李丽是你的好朋友，她告诉你她昨天失恋了，很沮丧。此刻，你会说什么来安慰她？
2. 好朋友的父亲张某患结肠炎住院，你前去探望，这也是你第一次见到张父，你会说什么来安慰他？
3. 经体检，你的配偶患上晚期肺癌，你会说什么来安慰他／她？
4. 你的舅舅托福考试不及格，出国机会就此丧失，你会会说什么来安慰她？
5. 朱琳是你的同班同学，你们平时关系一般，得知她不幸患上血癌，您前去看望她，你会说什么来安慰他？
6. 李明是你的同学，也是你的好朋友，他竞选班长失利，你会说什么来安慰他？
7. 李晓多是个来自汶川地震灾区的孩子，现在在你们班就读，他向来表现坚强，但是有一天跟你聊天的时候，说到了地震中不幸遇难的父母，此时你会说什么安慰李晓多？
8. 你带 5 岁的侄女茜茜去逛街，在路上茜茜摔了一跤，眼泪在眼眶里打转，你会说什么安慰她？
9. 你新认识的朋友张博对你说他的心情非常不好，对人生很失望，你会说什么安慰他？
10. 朋友把他四岁的儿子小强托付给你照管一个下午，小强午觉醒来后就开始哭闹，你会说什么来安慰他？

2. English Questionnaire

A Questionnaire on Consoling

Dear friend: Consoling is a fairly common social phenomenon. It is a very special method of social communication. No matter how high our social status is, no matter where we are, consoling will be used in our daily communication and can be seen in the movies, TV series and literary works. The expression mode of consoling, we think, will be different under different cultures.

This questionnaire is the first step. We need to know your words on what might be provided. Please be as honest and realistic as possible in your answers! Your response will be treated in confidence. It is entirely anonymous, unless you wish to add your name at the end.

Section I: Personal Information

In what age group are you?

- ○ 19 and under
- ○ 20 - 29
- ○ 30 - 39
- ○ 40 - 49
- ○ 50 - 59
- ○ 60 +

Gender:

○ Male

○ Female

In terms of your current occupation, how would you characterize yourself?

- ☐ Writer
- ☐ Administrative Assistant
- ☐ Journalist
- ☐ Secretary
- ☐ Academic
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Technical expert
- ☐ Student

Section II: Situations for You to Complete

Situation 1 Lily is your close friend. She is telling you that her boyfriend left her yesterday. She is rather frustrated right now. What are you going to say to console her?

Situation 2 Jack Smith is your best friend, whose father has been on hospital because of collitis. You are now at the ward to visit him for the first time. What are you going to say to console him?

Situation 3 Your spouse has got a terminal lung cancer. You two got the results from the doctor now. What are you going to say to console him/her?

Situation 4 Your Uncle Tom failed his TOEFL test. Just because of this, he has no chance to go abroad. What are you going to say to console him?

Situation 5 Jullin is your classmate. Your friendship is just so-so. Yesterday you got the news that she had been admitted to hospital because of leukemia. Imagine you are visiting her. What are you going to say to console her?

Situation 6 Li Ming is your classmate as well as your best friend. He failed in the election for monitor. What are you going to say to console him?

Situation 7 Donna is a new student in your class. Her parents were killed in the Wenchuan Earthquake. Just now, she has told you all that she had lost. What are you going to say to console her?

Situation 8 You are going shopping with your five-year-old niece Cecee. She has fallen over and is crying. What are you going to say to console her?

Situation 9 Bobby, your new friend, is telling you that he is very frustrated, and lost his heart for his future. What are you going to say to console her?

Situation 10 You are now taking care of a four-year-old boy, John, who is your friend's son. After sleeping for an hour in the afternoon, he is crying for his mother. What are you going to say to console him?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME
TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAI